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ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND

Engraved by C.E. Wagstaff.

MONTAIGNE.

From an original Picture at Paris
in the "Dépot des Archives du Royaume".

Published by The Navarre Society, London.

ESSAYS OF
MONTAIGNE

TRANSLATED BY CHARLES COTTON

TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF MONTAIGNE, NOTES, A TRANSLATION OF ALL THE LETTERS KNOWN TO BE EXTANT, AND AN ENLARGED INDEX

With Portraits

EDITED BY

WILLIAM CAREW HAZLITT

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND

Que sçais-je?

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ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

BOOK THE FIRST—(Continued)

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

BOOK THE FIRST—(Continued)

CHAPTER XXVII

OF FRIENDSHIP

HAVING considered the proceedings of a painter that serves me, I had a mind to imitate his way. He chooses the fairest place and middle of any wall, or panel, wherein to draw a picture, which he finishes with his utmost care and art, and the vacuity about it he fills with grotesques, which are odd fantastic figures without any grace but what they derive from their variety, and the extravagance of their shapes. And in truth, what are these things I scribble, other than grotesques and monstrous bodies, made of various parts, without any certain figure, or any other than accidental order, coherence, or proportion?

"Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne."[1]

In this second part I go hand in hand with my painter; but fall very short of him in the first and the better, my power of handling not being such, that I dare to offer at a rich piece, finely polished, and set off according to art. I have therefore

[1] "A fair woman in her upper form terminates in a fish."—Horace, *De Arte Poeticâ*, v. 4.

thought fit to borrow one of Estienne de la Boetie, and such a one as shall honour and adorn all the rest of my work—namely, a discourse that he called Voluntary Servitude; but, since, those who did not know him have properly enough called it "Le contr' Un." He wrote in his youth[1] by way of essay, in honour of liberty against tyrants; and it has since run through the hands of men of great learning and judgment, not without singular and merited commendation; for it is finely written, and as full as anything can possibly be. And yet one may confidently say it is far short of what he was able to do; and if in that more mature age, wherein I had the happiness to know him, he had taken a design like this of mine, to commit his thoughts to writing, we should have seen a great many rare things, and such as would have gone very near to have rivalled the best writings of antiquity: for in natural parts especially, I know no man comparable to him. But he has left nothing behind him, save this treatise only (and that too by chance, for I believe he never saw it after it first went out of his hands), and some observations upon that edict of January,[2] made famous by our civil wars, which also shall elsewhere, peradventure, find a place. These were all I could recover of his remains, I to whom with so affectionate a remembrance, upon his death-bed, he by his last will bequeathed his library and papers, the little book of his works only excepted, which I committed to the press.[3] And this particular obligation I have to this treatise of his, that it was the occasion of my first coming acquainted with him; for it was showed to me long

[1] "Not being as yet eighteen years old."—Edition of 1588.

[2] 1562, which granted to the Huguenots the public exercise of their religion.

[3] In 1571, as more than once already stated.

before I had the good fortune to know him; and gave me the first knowledge of his name, proving the first cause and foundation of a friendship, which we afterwards improved and maintained, so long as God was pleased to continue us together, so perfect, inviolate, and entire, that certainly the like is hardly to be found in story, and amongst the men of this age, there is no sign nor trace of any such thing in use; so much concurrence is required to the building of such a one, that 'tis much, if fortune bring it but once to pass in three ages.

There is nothing to which nature seems so much to have inclined us, as to society; and Aristotle says,[1] that the good legislators had more respect to friendship than to justice. Now the most supreme point of its perfection is this: for, generally, all those that pleasure, profit, public or private interest create and nourish, are so much the less beautiful and generous, and so much the less friendships, by how much they mix another cause, and design, and fruit in friendship, than itself. Neither do the four ancient kinds, natural, social, hospitable, venereal, either separately or jointly, make up a true and perfect friendship.

That of children to parents is rather respect: friendship is nourished by communication, which cannot by reason of the great disparity, be betwixt these, but would rather perhaps offend the duties of nature; for neither are all the secret thoughts of fathers fit to be communicated to children, lest it beget an indecent familiarity betwixt them; nor can the advices and reproofs, which is one of the principal offices of friendship, be properly performed by the son to the father. There are some countries where 'twas the custom for children to kill their

[1] *Nikomachean Ethics*, viii.

fathers; and others, where the fathers killed their children, to avoid their being an impediment one to another in life; and naturally the expectations of the one depend upon the ruin of the other. There have been great philosophers who have made nothing of this tie of nature, as Aristippus for one, who[1] being pressed home about the affection he owed to his children, as being come out of him, presently fell to spit, saying, that this also came out of him, and that we also breed worms and lice; and that other, that Plutarch endeavoured to reconcile to his brother[2]: "I make never the more account of him," said he, "for coming out of the same hole." This name of brother does indeed carry with it a fine and delectable sound, and for that reason, he and I called one another brothers: but the complication of interests, the division of estates, and that the wealth of the one should be the property of the other, strangely relax and weaken the fraternal tie: brothers pursuing their fortune and advancement by the same path, 'tis hardly possible but they must of necessity often jostle and hinder one another. Besides, why is it necessary that the correspondence of manners, parts, and inclinations, which begets the true and perfect friendships, should always meet in these relations? The father and the son may be of quite contrary humours, and so of brothers: he is my son, he is my brother; but he is passionate, ill-natured, or a fool. And moreover, by how much these are friendships that the law and natural obligation impose upon us, so much less is there of our own choice and voluntary freedom; whereas that voluntary liberty of ours has no production more promptly and properly its own than affection

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 31. [2] *On Brotherly Love*, c. 4.

and friendship. Not that I have not in my own person experimented all that can possibly be expected of that kind, having had the best and most indulgent father, even to his extreme old age, that ever was, and who was himself descended from a family for many generations famous and exemplary for brotherly concord:—

"Et ipse
Notus in fratres animi paterni."[1]

We are not here to bring the love we bear to women, though it be an act of our own choice, into comparison, nor rank it with the others. The fire of this, I confess:—

"Neque enim est dea nescia nostri
Quæ dulcum curis miscet amaritiem,"[2]

is more active, more eager, and more sharp: but withal, 'tis more precipitant, fickle, moving, and inconstant; a fever subject to intermissions and paroxysms, that has seized but on one part of us. Whereas on friendship, 'tis a general and universal fire, but temperate and equal, a constant established heat, all gentle and smooth, without poignancy or roughness. Moreover, in love, 'tis no other than frantic desire for that which flies from us:—

"Come segue la lepre il cacciatore
Al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito;
Ne piu l'estima poi che presa vede;
E sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede"[3];

so soon as it enters into the terms of friendship, that is to say, into a concurrence of desires, it

[1] "And I myself, known to have a paternal love toward my brothers."—Horace, *Ode*, ii. 2, 6.

[2] "Nor is the goddess unknown to me who mixes a sweet bitterness with my love."—Catullus, lxviii. 17.

[3] "As the hunter pursues the hare, in cold and heat, to the mountain, to the shore, nor cares for it farther when he sees it taken, and only delights in chasing that which flees from him."—Aristotle, x. 7.

vanishes and is gone, fruition destroys it, as having only a fleshly end, and such a one as is subject to satiety. Friendship, on the contrary, is enjoyed proportionably as it is desired; and only grows up, is nourished and improved by enjoyment, as being of itself spiritual, and the soul growing still more refined by practice. Under this perfect friendship, the other fleeting affections have in my younger years found some place in me, to say nothing of him, who himself so confesses but too much in his verses; so that I had both these passions, but always so, that I could myself well enough distinguish them, and never in any degree of comparison with one another; the first maintaining its flight in so lofty and so brave a place, as with disdain to look down, and see the other flying at a far humbler pitch below.

As concerning marriage, besides that it is a covenant, the entrance into which only is free, but the continuance in it forced and compulsory, having another dependence than that of our own free will, and a bargain commonly contracted to other ends, there almost always happens a thousand intricacies in it to unravel, enough to break the thread and to divert the current of a lively affection: whereas friendship has no manner of business or traffic with aught but itself. Moreover, to say truth, the ordinary talent of women is not such as is sufficient to maintain the conference and communication required to the support of this sacred tie; nor do they appear to be endued with constancy of mind, to sustain the pinch of so hard and durable a knot. And doubtless, if without this, there could be such a free and voluntary familiarity contracted, where not only the souls might have this entire fruition, but the bodies also might share in the alliance, and a man be

engaged throughout, the friendship would certainly be more full and perfect; but it is without example that this sex has ever yet arrived at such perfection; and, by the common consent of the ancient schools, it is wholly rejected from it.

That other Grecian licence is justly abhorred by our manners, which also, from having, according to their practice, a so necessary disparity of age and difference of offices betwixt the lovers, answered no more to the perfect union and harmony that we here require than the other:—

"Quis est enim iste amor amicitiæ? cur neque deformem adolescentem quisquam amat, neque formosum senem?"[1]

Neither will that very picture that the Academy presents of it, as I conceive, contradict me, when I say, that this first fury inspired by the son of Venus into the heart of the lover, upon sight of the flower and prime of a springing and blossoming youth, to which they allow all the insolent and passionate efforts that an immoderate ardour can produce, was simply founded upon external beauty, the false image of corporal generation; for it could not ground this love upon the soul, the sight of which as yet lay concealed, was but now springing, and not of maturity to blossom; that this fury, if it seized upon a low spirit, the means by which it preferred its suit were rich presents, favour in advancement to dignities, and such trumpery, which they by no means approve; if on a more generous soul, the pursuit was suitably generous, by philosophical instructions, precepts to revere religion, to obey the laws, to die for the good of one's country; by examples of valour, prudence, and justice, the

[1] "For what is that friendly love? why does no one love a deformed youth or a comely old man?"—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iv. 33.

lover studying to render himself acceptable by the grace and beauty of the soul, that of his body being long since faded and decayed, hoping by this mental society to establish a more firm and lasting contract. When this courtship came to effect in due season (for that which they do not require in the lover, namely, leisure and discretion in his pursuit, they strictly require in the person loved, forasmuch as he is to judge of an internal beauty, of difficult knowledge and abstruse discovery), then there sprung in the person loved the desire of a spiritual conception; by the mediation of a spiritual beauty. This was the principal; the corporeal, an accidental and secondary matter; quite the contrary as to the lover. For this reason they prefer the person beloved, maintaining that the gods in like manner preferred him too, and very much blame the poet Æschylus for having, in the loves of Achilles and Patroclus, given the lover's part to Achilles, who was in the first and beardless flower of his adolescence, and the handsomest of all the Greeks. After this general community, the sovereign and most worthy part presiding and governing, and performing its proper offices, they say, that thence great utility was derived, both by private and public concerns; that it constituted the force and power of the countries where it prevailed, and the chiefest security of liberty and justice. Of which the healthy loves of Harmodius and Aristogiton are instances. And therefore it is that they called it sacred and divine, and conceive that nothing but the violence of tyrants and the baseness of the common people are inimical to it. Finally, all that can be said in favour of the Academy is, that it was a love which ended in friendship, which well enough agrees with the Stoical definition of love:—

"Amorem conatum esse amicitiæ faciendæ ex pulchritudinis specie."[1]

I return to my own more just and true description:—

"Omnino amicitiæ, corroboratis jam confirmatisque, et ingeniis, et ætatibus, judicandæ sunt."[2]

For the rest, what we commonly call friends and friendships, are nothing but acquaintance and familiarities, either occasionally contracted, or upon some design, by means of which there happens some little intercourse betwixt our souls. But in the friendship I speak of, they mix and work themselves into one piece, with so universal a mixture, that there is no more sign of the seam by which they were first conjoined. If a man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I find it could no otherwise be expressed, than by making answer: because it was he, because it was I. There is, beyond all that I am able to say, I know not what inexplicable and fated power that brought on this union. We sought one another long before we met, and by the characters we heard of one another, which wrought upon our affections more than, in reason, mere reports should do; I think 'twas by some secret appointment of heaven. We embraced in our names; and at our first meeting, which was accidentally at a great city entertainment, we found ourselves so mutually taken with one another, so acquainted, and so endeared betwixt ourselves, that from thenceforward nothing was so near to us as one another. He wrote an excellent Latin satire, since printed, wherein he excuses the precipitation of our intelligence, so suddenly come to perfection,

[1] "That love was an effort to form friendship from the beauty of the object."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, vi. 34.

[2] "Altogether friendships are to be judged from the minds and years of those, when they become fortified and confirmed."—Cicero, *De Amicit.*, c. 20.

saying, that destined to have so short a continuance, as begun so late (for we were both full-grown men, and he some years the older), there was no time to lose, nor were we tied to conform to the example of those slow and regular friendships, that require so many precautions of long preliminary conversation. This has no other idea than that of itself, and can only refer to itself: this is no one special consideration, nor two, nor three, nor four, nor a thousand; 'tis I know not what quintessence of all this mixture, which, seizing my whole will, carried it to plunge and lose itself in his, and that having seized his whole will, brought it back with equal concurrence and appetite to plunge and lose itself in mine. I may truly say lose, reserving nothing to ourselves that was either his or mine.[1]

When Lælius,[2] in the presence of the Roman consuls, who after thay had sentenced Tiberius Gracchus, prosecuted all those who had had any familiarity with him also, came to ask Caius Blosius, who was his chiefest friend, how much he would have done for him, and that he made answer: "All things." "How! All things!" said Lælius. "And what if he had commanded you to fire our temples?" "He would never have commanded me that," replied Blosius. "But what if he had?" said Lælius. "I would have obeyed him," said the other. If he was so perfect a friend to Gracchus as the histories report him to have been, there was yet no necessity of offending the consuls by such a bold confession, though he might still have retained the assurance he had of Gracchus' disposition. However, those who accuse this answer as seditious, do not well understand the mystery;

[1] All this relates to Estienne de la Boetie.
[2] Cicero, *De Amicit.*, c. 11.

nor presuppose, as it was true, that he had Gracchus' will in his sleeve, both by the power of a friend, and the perfect knowledge he had of the man: they were more friends than citizens, more friends to one another than either enemies or friends to their country, or than friends to ambition and innovation; having absolutely given up themselves to one another, either held absolutely the reins of the other's inclination; and suppose all this guided by virtue, and all this by the conduct of reason, which also without these it had not been possible to do, Blosius' answer was such as it ought to be. If any of their actions flew out of the handle, they were neither (according to my measure of friendship) friends to one another, nor to themselves. As to the rest, this answer carries no worse sound, than mine would do to one that should ask me: "If your will should command you to kill your daughter, would you do it?" and that I should make answer, that I would; for this expresses no consent to such an act, forasmuch as I do not in the least suspect my own will, and as little that of such a friend. 'Tis not in the power of all the eloquence in the world, to dispossess me of the certainty I have of the intentions and resolutions of my friend; nay, no one action of his, what face soever it might bear, could be presented to me, of which I could not presently, and at first sight, find out the moving cause. Our souls had drawn so unanimously together, they had considered each other with so ardent an affection, and with the like affection laid open the very bottom of our hearts to one another's view, that I not only knew his as well as my own; but should certainly in any concern of mine have trusted my interest much more willingly with him, than with myself.

Let no one, therefore, rank other common friendships with such a one as this. I have had as much experience of these as another, and of the most perfect of their kind: but I do not advise that any should confound the rules of the one and the other, for they would find themselves much deceived. In those other ordinary friendships, you are to walk with bridle in your hand, with prudence and circumspection, for in them the knot is not so sure that a man may not half suspect it will slip. "Love him," said Chilo,[1] "so as if you were one day to hate him; and hate him so as you were one day to love him." This precept, though abominable in the sovereign and perfect friendship I speak of, is nevertheless very sound as to the practice of the ordinary and customary ones, and to which the saying that Aristotle had so frequent in his mouth, "O my friends, there is no friend,"[2] may very fitly be applied. In this noble commerce, good offices, presents, and benefits, by which other friendships are supported and maintained, do not deserve so much as to be mentioned; and the reason is the concurrence of our wills; for, as the kindness I have for myself receives no increase, for anything I relieve myself withal in time of need (whatever the Stoics say), and as I do not find myself obliged to myself for any service I do myself: so the union of such friends, being truly perfect, deprives them of all idea of such duties, and makes them loathe and banish from their conversation these words of division and distinction, benefits, obligation, acknowledgment, entreaty, thanks, and the like. All things, wills, thoughts, opinions, goods, wives, children, honours, and lives, being in effect common betwixt them, and that

[1] Aulus Gellius, i. 3.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, v. 21.

absolute concurrence of affections being no other than one soul in two bodies (according to that very proper definition of Aristotle),[1] they can neither lend nor give anything to one another. This is the reason why the lawgivers, to honour marriage with some resemblance of this divine alliance, interdict all gifts betwixt man and wife; inferring by that, that all should belong to each of them, and that they have nothing to divide or to give to each other.

If, in the friendship of which I speak, one could give to the other, the receiver of the benefit would be the man that obliged his friend; for each of them contending and above all things studying how to be useful to the other, he that administers the occasion is the liberal man, in giving his friend the satisfaction of doing that towards him which above all things he most desires. When the philosopher Diogenes wanted money, he used to say,[2] that he redemanded it of his friends, not that he demanded it. And to let you see the practical working of this, I will here produce an ancient and singular example.[3] Eudamidas, a Corinthian, had two friends, Charixenus a Sicyonian and Areteus a Corinthian; this man coming to die, being poor, and his two friends rich, he made his will after this manner. "I bequeath to Areteus the maintenance of my mother, to support and provide for her in her old age; and to Charixenus I bequeath the care of marrying my daughter, and to give her as good a portion as he is able; and in case one of these chance to die, I hereby substitute the survivor in his place." They who first saw this will made themselves very merry at the contents: but the

[1] Diogenes Laertius, v. 20. [2] Idem, vi. 46.
[3] From the *Toxaris* of Lucian, c. 22.

legatees, being made acquainted with it, accepted it with very great content; and one of them, Charixenus, dying within five days after, and by that means the charge of both duties devolving solely on him, Areteus nurtured the old woman with very great care and tenderness, and of five talents he had in estate, he gave two and a half in marriage with an only daughter he had of his own, and two and a half in marriage with the daughter of Eudamidas, and on one and the same day solemnised both their nuptials.

This example is very full, if one thing were not to be objected, namely the multitude of friends: for the perfect friendship I speak of is indivisible; each one gives himself so entirely to his friend, that he has nothing left to distribute to others: on the contrary, is sorry that he is not double, treble, or quadruple, and that he has not many souls and many wills, to confer them all upon this one object. Common friendships will admit of division; one may love the beauty of this person, the good-humour of that, the liberality of a third, the paternal affection of a fourth, the fraternal love of a fifth, and so of the rest: but this friendship that possesses the whole soul, and there rules and sways with an absolute sovereignty, cannot possibly admit of a rival. If two at the same time should call to you for succour, to which of them would you run? Should they require of you contrary offices, how could you serve them both? Should one commit a thing to your silence that it were of importance to the other to know, how would you disengage yourself? A unique and particular friendship dissolves all other obligations whatsoever: the secret I have sworn not to reveal to any other, I may without perjury communicate to him who is not

another, but myself. 'Tis miracle enough certainly, for a man to double himself, and those that talk of tripling, talk they know not of what. Nothing is extreme, that has its like; and he who shall suppose, that of two, I love one as much as the other, that they mutually love one another too, and love me as much as I love them, multiplies into a confraternity the most single of units, and whereof, moreover, one alone is the hardest thing in the world to find. The rest of this story suits very well with what I was saying; for Eudamidas, as a bounty and favour, bequeaths to his friends a legacy of employing themselves in his necessity; he leaves them heirs to this liberality of his, which consists in giving them the opportunity of conferring a benefit upon him; and doubtless, the force of friendship is more eminently apparent in this act of his, than in that of Areteus. In short, these are effects not to be imagined nor comprehended by such as have not experience of them, and which make me infinitely honour and admire the answer of that young soldier to Cyrus, by whom being asked how much he would take for a horse, with which he had won the prize of a race, and whether he would exchange him for a kingdom? "No, truly, sir," said he, "but I would give him with all my heart, to get thereby a true friend, could I find out any man worthy of that alliance."[1] He did not say ill in saying, "could I find": for though one may almost everywhere meet with men sufficiently qualified for a superficial acquaintance, yet in this, where a man is to deal from the very bottom of his heart, without any manner of reservation, it will be requisite

[1] Xenophon, *Cyropædia*, viii. 3. When some one told Cowper the poet that he was going to see a friend, "A friend!" he returned; "let me go with you." *Vulgare amici nomen; sed rara est fides.*—Phædrus, iii. 9.

that all the wards and springs be truly wrought and perfectly sure.

In confederations that hold but by one end, we are only to provide against the imperfections that particularly concern that end. It can be of no importance to me of what religion my physician or my lawyer is; this consideration has nothing in common with the offices of friendship which they owe me; and I am of the same indifference in the domestic acquaintance my servants must necessarily contract with me. I never inquire, when I am to take a footman, if he be chaste, but if he be diligent; and am not solicitous if my muleteer be given to gaming, as if he be strong and able; or if my cook be a swearer, if he be a good cook. I do not take upon me to direct what other men should do in the government of their families, there are plenty that meddle enough with that, but only give an account of my method in my own:—

"Mihi sic usus est: tibi, ut opus est facto, face."[1]

For table-talk, I prefer the pleasant and witty before the learned and the grave; in bed, beauty before goodness; in common discourse the ablest speaker, whether or no there be sincerity in the case. And, as he that was found astride upon a hobby-horse, playing with his children, entreated the person who had surprised him in that posture to say nothing of it till himself came to be a father,[2] supposing that the fondness that would then possess his own soul, would render him a fairer judge of such an action; so I, also, could wish to speak to such as have had experience of what I say: though, knowing how remote a thing such a friendship is

[1] "This has been my way; as for you, do as you find needful."—Terence, *Heaut.*, i. 1, 28.

[2] Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*, c. 9.

from the common practice, and how rarely it is to be found, I despair of meeting with any such judge. For even these discourses left us by antiquity upon this subject, seem to me flat and poor, in comparison of the sense I have of it, and in this particular, the effects surpass even the precepts of philosophy:—

"Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico."[1]

The ancient Menander declared him to be happy that had had the good fortune to meet with but the shadow of a friend[2]: and doubtless he had good reason to say so, especially if he spoke by experience: for in good earnest, if I compare all the rest of my life, though, thanks be to God, I have passed my time pleasantly enough, and at my ease, and the loss of such a friend excepted, free from any grievous affliction, and in great tranquillity of mind, having been contented with my natural and original commodities, without being solicitous after others; if I should compare it all, I say, with the four years I had the happiness to enjoy the sweet society of this excellent man, 'tis nothing but smoke, an obscure and tedious night. From the day that I lost him:—

"Quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum (sic, dî, voluistis) habebo,"[3]

I have only led a languishing life; and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of administering anything of consolation, double my affliction for his loss. We were halves throughout,

[1] "While I have sense left to me, there will never be anything more acceptable to me than an agreeable friend."—Horace, *Sat.*, i. 5, 44.

[2] Plutarch, *On Brotherly Love*, c. 3.

[3] "Which I shall ever hold bitter, ever honoured (so, gods, have ye willed)."—*Æneid*, v. 49.

and to that degree, that methinks, by outliving him, I defraud him of his part:—

> "Nec fas esse ullâ me voluptate hic frui
> Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps."[1]

I was so grown and accustomed to be always his double in all places and in all things, that methinks I am no more than half of myself:—

> "Illam meæ si partem animæ tulit
> Maturior vis, quid moror altera?
> Nec carus æque, nec superstes
> Integer? Ille dies utramque
> Duxit ruinam."[2]

There is no action or imagination of mine wherein I do not miss him; as I know that he would have missed me: for as he surpassed me by infinite degrees in virtue and all other accomplishments, so he also did in the duties of friendship:—

> "Quis desiderio sit pudor, aut modus
> Tam cari capitis?"[3]

> "O misero frater adempte mihi!
> Omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
> Quæ tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
> Tu mea, tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater;
> Tecum unâ tota est nostra sepulta anima:
> Cujus ego interitu totâ de mente fugavi
> Hæc studia, atque omnes delicias animi.
> Alloquar? audiero nunquam tua verba loquentem?

---

[1] "I have prescribed to myself that it is not rightful to enjoy any pleasure, so long as he, my partner in such great ones, is away."—Terence, *Heaut.*, i. 1, 97.

[2] "If a superior force has taken that part of my soul, why do I, the remaining one, linger behind? What is left is not so dear, nor an entire thing: this day has wrought the destruction of both."—Horace, *Ode*, ii. 17, 5.

[3] "What shame can there, or measure, in lamenting so dear a friend?"—Horace, *Ode*, i. 24, 1.

Nunquam ego te, vitâ frater amabilior
Aspiciam posthac; at certe semper amabo—"[1]

But let us hear a boy of sixteen speak a little.[2] . . .

Because I have found that that work has been since brought out, and with a mischievous design, by those who aim at disturbing and changing the condition of our government, without troubling themselves to think whether they are likely to improve it: and because they have mixed up his work with some of their own performance, I have refrained from inserting it here. But that the memory of the author may not be injured, nor suffer with such as could not come nearhand to be acquainted with his principles, I here give them to understand, that it was written by him in his boyhood, and that by way of exercise only, as a common theme that has been hackneyed by a thousand writers. I make no question but that he himself believed what he wrote, being so conscientious that he would not so much as lie in jest: and I moreover know, that

[1] "O brother, taken from me miserable! with thee, all our joys have vanished, those joys which, in thy life, thy dear love nourished. Dying, thou, my brother, hast destroyed all my happiness. My whole soul is buried with thee. Through whose death I have banished from my mind these studies, and all the delights of the mind. Shall I address thee? I shall never hear thy voice. Never shall I behold thee hereafter. O brother, dearer to me than life. Nought remains, but assuredly I shall ever love thee."—Catullus, lxviii. 20; lxv. 9.

[2] In Cotton's translation the work referred to is "those Memoirs upon the famous edict of January," of which mention has already been made in the present edition. The edition of 1580, however, and the Variorum edition of 1872–1900, indicate no particular work; but the edition of 1580 has it "this boy of eighteen years" (which was the age at which La Boetie wrote his "Servitude Volontaire"), speaks of "a boy of sixteen" as occurring only in the common editions, and it would seem tolerably clear that this more important work was, in fact, the production to which Montaigne refers, and that the proper reading of the text should be "sixteen years." What "this boy spoke" is not given by Montaigne, for the reason stated in the next following paragraph.

could it have been in his own choice, he had rather have been born at Venice, than at Sarlac; and with reason. But he had another maxim sovereignly imprinted in his soul, very religiously to obey and submit to the laws under which he was born. There never was a better citizen, more affectionate to his country; nor a greater enemy to all the commotions and innovations of his time: so that he would much rather have employed his talent to the extinguishing of those civil flames, than have added any fuel to them; he had a mind fashioned to the model of better ages. Now, in exchange of this serious piece, I will present you with another of a more gay and frolic air, from the same hand, and written at the same age.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—XXIX.[1]

OF MODERATION

As if we had an infectious touch, we, by our manner of handling, corrupt things that in themselves are laudable and good: we may grasp virtue so that it becomes vicious, if we embrace it too stringently and with too violent a desire. Those who say, there is never any excess in virtue, forasmuch as it is not virtue when it once becomes excess, only play upon words:—

[1] Chapter XXVIII. contained in the edition of 1588 nine-and-twenty sonnets of La Boetie, accompanied by a dedicatory epistle to Madame de Grammont. The former, which are referred to at the end of Chap. XXVII., do not really belong to the book, and are of very slight interest at this time; the epistle is transferred to the Correspondence. The sonnets, with the letter, were presumably sent some time after Letters V. *et seqq.* Montaigne seems to have had several copies written out to forward to friends or acquaintances.

"Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui,
Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petat ipsam." [1]

This is a subtle consideration of philosophy. A man may both be too much in love with virtue, and be excessive in a just action. Holy Writ agrees with this, Be not wiser than you should, but be soberly wise.[2] I have known a great man [3] prejudice the opinion men had of his devotion, by pretending to be devout beyond all examples of others of his condition. I love temperate and moderate natures. An immoderate zeal, even to that which is good, even though it does not offend, astonishes me, and puts me to study what name to give it. Neither the mother of Pausanias,[4] who

[1] "Let the wise man bear the name of a madman, the just one of an unjust, if he seek wisdom more than is sufficient."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 6, 15.

[2] St. Paul, *Epistle to the Romans*, xii. 3.

[3] "It is likely that Montaigne meant Henry III., king of France. The Cardinal d'Ossat, writing to Louise, the queen-dowager, told her, in his frank manner, that he had lived as much or more like a monk than a monarch (Letter XXIII.). And Pope Sextus V., speaking of that prince one day to the Cardinal de Joyeuse, protector of the affairs of France, said to him pleasantly, 'There is nothing that your king hath not done, and does not do so still, to be a monk, nor anything that I have not done, not to be a monk.'"—Coste.

[4] Diodorus Siculus, xi. 45.

"Montaigne would here give us to understand, upon the authority of Diodorus Siculus, that Pausanias' mother gave the first hint of the punishment that was to be inflicted on her son. 'Pausanias,' says this historian, 'perceiving that the ephori, and some other Lacedæmonians, aimed at apprehending him, got the start of them, and went and took sanctuary in Minerva's temple: and the Lacedæmonians, being doubtful whether they ought to take him from thence in violation of the franchise there, it is said that his own mother came herself to the temple, but spoke nothing, nor did anything more than lay a piece of brick, which she brought with her, on the threshold of the temple, which, when she had done, she returned home. The Lacedæmonians, taking the hint from the mother, caused the gate of the temple to be walled up, and by this means starved Pausanias, so that he died with hunger, &c.' (lib. xi. cap. 10, of Amyot's translation). The name of Pausanias' mother was Alcithea, as we are informed by Thucydides' scholiast, who only says that it was reported, that when they set about walling up the gates of the chapel in which Pausanias had taken refuge, his mother Alcithea laid the first stone."—Coste.

was the first instructor of her son's process, and threw the first stone towards his death, nor Posthumius the dictator,[1] who put his son to death, whom the ardour of youth had successfully pushed upon the enemy a little more advanced than the rest of his squadron, do appear to me so much just as strange; and I should neither advise nor like to follow so savage a virtue, and that costs so dear.[2] The archer that shoots over, misses as much as he that falls short, and 'tis equally troublesome to my sight, to look up at a great light, and to look down into a dark abyss. Callicles in Plato[3] says, that the extremity of philosophy is hurtful, and advises not to dive into it beyond the limits of profit; that, taken moderately, it is pleasant and useful; but that in the end it renders a man brutish and vicious, a contemner of religion and the common laws, an enemy to civil conversation, and all human pleasures, incapable of all public administration, unfit either to assist others or to relieve himself, and a fit object for all sorts of injuries and affronts. He says true; for in its excess, it enslaves our natural freedom, and by an impertinent subtlety,

[1] Val. Maximus, ii. 7.

[2] "Opinions differ as to the truth of this fact. Livy thinks he has good authority for rejecting it, because it does not appear in history that Posthumius was branded with it, as Titus Manlius was, about 100 years after his time; for Manlius, having put his son to death for the like cause, obtained the odious name of Imperiosus, and since that time Manliana Imperia has been used as a term to signify orders that are too severe; Manliana Imperia, says Livy, were not only horrible for the time present, but of a bad example to posterity. And this historian makes no doubt but such commands would have been actually styled Posthumiana Imperia, if Posthumus had been the first who set so barbarous an example (Livy, lib. iv. cap. 29, and lib. viii. cap. 7). But, however, Montaigne has Valer. Maximus on his side, who says expressly, that Posthumus caused his son to be put to death, and Diodorus Siculus (lib. xii. cap. 19)."—Coste.

[3] In the *Gorgias*.

leads us out of the fair and beaten way that nature has traced for us.

The love we bear to our wives is very lawful, and yet theology thinks fit to curb and restrain it. As I remember, I have read in one place of St. Thomas Aquinas,[1] where he condemns marriages within any of the forbidden degrees, for this reason, amongst others, that there is some danger, lest the friendship a man bears to such a woman, should be immoderate; for if the conjugal affection be full and perfect betwixt them, as it ought to be, and that it be over and above surcharged with that of kindred too, there is no doubt, but such an addition will carry the husband beyond the bounds of reason.

Those sciences that regulate the manners of men, divinity and philosophy, will have their say in everything; there is no action so private and secret that can escape their inspection and jurisdiction. They are best taught who are best able to control and curb their own liberty; women expose their nudities as much as you will upon the account of pleasure, though in the necessities of physic they are altogether as shy. I will, therefore, in their behalf[2] teach the husbands, that is, such as are too vehement in the exercise of the matrimonial duty —if such there still be—this lesson, that the very pleasures they enjoy in the society of their wives are reproachable if immoderate, and that a licentious and riotous abuse of them is a fault as reprovable here as in illicit connections. Those immodest and debauched tricks and postures, that the first ardour suggests to us in this affair, are not only

[1] Secunda Secundæ, Quæst. 154, art. 9.

[2] Coste translates this: "on the part of philosophy and theology," observing that but few wives would think themselves obliged to Montaigne for any such lesson to their husbands.

indecently but detrimentally practised upon our wives. Let them at least learn impudence from another hand; they are ever ready enough for our business, and I for my part always went the plain way to work.

Marriage is a solemn and religious tie, and therefore the pleasure we extract from it should be a sober and serious delight, and mixed with a certain kind of gravity; it should be a sort of discreet and conscientious pleasure. And seeing that the chief end of it is generation, some make a question, whether when men are out of hopes of that fruit, as when they are superannuated or already with child, it be lawful to embrace our wives; 'tis homicide, according to Plato.[1] Certain nations (the Mohammedan, amongst others) abominate all conjunction with women with child, others also, with those who are in their courses. Zenobia would never admit her husband for more than one encounter, after which she left him to his own swing for the whole time of her conception, and not till after that would again receive him[2]; a brave and generous example of conjugal continence. It was doubtless from some lascivious poet,[3] and one that himself was in great distress for a little of this sport, that Plato borrowed this story; that Jupiter was one day so hot upon his wife, that not having so much patience as till she could get to the couch, he threw her upon the floor, where the vehemence of pleasure made him forget the great and important resolutions he had but newly taken with the rest of the gods in his celestial council, and to brag that he had had as good a

[1] Laws, 8.
[2] Trebellius Pollio, *Triginta Tyran.*, c. 30.
[3] The lascivious poet is Homer; see his *Iliad*, xiv. 294.

bout, as when he got her maidenhead, unknown to their parents.

The kings of Persia were wont to invite their wives to the beginning of their festivals; but when the wine began to work in good earnest, and that they were to give the reins to pleasure, they sent them back to their private apartments, that they might not participate in their immoderate lust, sending for other women in their stead, with whom they were not obliged to so great a decorum of respect.[1] All pleasures and all sorts of gratifications are not properly and fitly conferred upon all sorts of persons. Epaminondas had committed to prison a young man for certain debauches; for whom Pelopidas mediated, that at his request he might be set at liberty, which Epaminondas denied to him, but granted it at the first word to a wench of his, that made the same intercession; saying, that it was a gratification fit for such a one as she, but not for a captain.[2] Sophocles being joint prætor with Pericles, seeing accidentally a fine boy pass by: "O what a charming boy is that!" said he. "That might be very well," answered Pericles, "for any other than a prætor, who ought not only to have his hands, but his eyes, too, chaste."[3] Ælius Verus, the emperor, answered his wife, who reproached him with his love to other women, that he did it upon a conscientious account, forasmuch as marriage was a name of honour and dignity, not of wanton and lascivious desire[4]; and our ecclesiastical history preserves the memory of that woman in great veneration, who parted from her husband

[1] Plutarch, *Precepts of Marriage*, c. 14.
[2] Plutarch, *Instructions to Statesmen.*
[3] Cicero, *De Offic.*, i. 40.
[4] Spartian, in *Vitâ*, c. 5.

because she would not comply with his indecent and inordinate desires. In fine, there is no pleasure so just and lawful, where intemperance and excess are not to be condemned.

But, to speak the truth, is not man a most miserable creature the while? It is scarce, by his natural condition, in his power to taste one pleasure pure and entire; and yet must he be contriving doctrines and precepts to curtail that little he has; he is not yet wretched enough, unless by art and study he augment his own misery:—

"Fortunæ miseras auximus arte vias."[1]

Human wisdom makes as ill use of her talent, when she exercises it in rescinding from the number and sweetness of those pleasures that are naturally our due, as she employs it favourably and well in artificially disguising and tricking out the ills of life, to alleviate the sense of them. Had I ruled the roast, I should have taken another and more natural course, which, to say the truth, is both commodious and holy, and should, peradventure, have been able to have limited it too; notwithstanding that both our spiritual and corporal physicians, as by compact betwixt themselves, can find no other way to cure, nor other remedy for the infirmities of the body and the soul, than by misery and pain. To this end, watchings, fastings, hair-shirts, remote and solitary banishments, perpetual imprisonments, whips and other afflictions, have been introduced amongst men: but so, that they should carry a sting with them, and be real afflictions indeed; and not fall out as it once did to one Gallio, who having been sent an exile into the isle of Lesbos, news was not long after brought to Rome, that he there lived

[1] "We have augmented by art the wretchedness of fortune."—Propertius, lib. iii. 7, 44.

as merry as the day was long; and that what had been enjoined him for a penance, turned to his pleasure and satisfaction: whereupon the Senate thought fit to recall him home to his wife and family, and confine him to his own house, to accommodate their punishment to his feeling and apprehension.[1] For to him whom fasting would make more healthful and more sprightly, and to him to whose palate fish were more acceptable than flesh, the prescription of these would have no curative effect; no more than in the other sort of physic, where drugs have no effect upon him who swallows them with appetite and pleasure: the bitterness of the potion and the abhorrence of the patient are necessary circumstances to the operation. The nature that would eat rhubarb like buttered turnips, would frustrate the use and virtue of it; it must be something to trouble and disturb the stomach, that must purge and cure it; and here the common rule, that things are cured by their contraries, fails; for in this one ill is cured by another.

This belief a little resembles that other so ancient one, of thinking to gratify the gods and nature by massacre and murder: an opinion universally once received in all religions. And still, in these later times wherein our fathers lived, Amurath at the taking of the Isthmus, immolated six hundred young Greeks to his father's soul, in the nature of a propitiatory sacrifice for his sins. And in those new countries discovered in this age of ours, which are pure and virgin yet, in comparison of ours, this practice is in some measure everywhere received: all their idols reek with human blood, not without various examples of horrid cruelty: some they burn alive, and take, half broiled, off the coals to tear out

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.*, vi. 3.

their hearts and entrails; some, even women, they flay alive, and with their bloody skins clothe and disguise others.[1] Neither are we without great examples of constancy and resolution in this affair: the poor souls that are to be sacrificed, old men, women, and children, themselves going about some days before to beg alms for the offering of their sacrifice, presenting themselves to the slaughter, singing and dancing with the spectators.

The ambassadors of the king of Mexico, setting out to Fernando Cortez the power and greatness of their master, after having told him, that he had thirty vassals, of whom each was able to raise an hundred thousand fighting men, and that he kept his court in the fairest and best fortified city under the sun, added at last, that he was obliged yearly to offer to the gods fifty thousand men. And it is affirmed, that he maintained a continual war, with some potent neighbouring nations, not only to keep the young men in exercise, but principally to have wherewithal to furnish his sacrifices with his prisoners of war. At a certain town in another place, for the welcome of the said Cortez, they sacrificed fifty men at once. I will tell you this one tale more, and I have done; some of these people being beaten by him, sent to acknowledge him, and to treat with him of a peace, whose messengers carried him three sorts of gifts, which they presented in these terms: "Behold, lord, here are five slaves: if thou art a furious god that feedeth upon flesh and blood, eat these, and we will bring thee more; if thou art an affable god, behold here incense and feathers; but if thou art a man, take these fowls and these fruits that we have brought thee."

[1] It is to be apprehended that these barbarities were introduced by the European conquerors of America, and were not indigenous.

CHAPTER XXX

OF CANNIBALS[1]

WHEN King Pyrrhus invaded Italy, having viewed and considered the order of the army the Romans sent out to meet him; "I know not," said he, "what kind of barbarians" (for so the Greeks called all other nations) "these may be; but the disposition of this army that I see has nothing of barbarism in it."[2] As much said the Greeks of that which Flaminius brought into their country[3]; and Philip, beholding from an eminence the order and distribution of the Roman camp formed in his kingdom by Publius Sulpicius Galba, spake to the same effect.[4] By which it appears how cautious men ought to be of taking things upon trust from vulgar opinion, and that we are to judge by the eye of reason, and not from common report.

I long had a man in my house that lived ten or twelve years in the New World, discovered in these latter days, and in that part of it where Villegaignon

[1] Montaigne probably found at least the basis of the material for this paper in three savages, whom Martin Frobisher brought back with him from America in 1577, and of whom there is an account in English, 1577, and in French, 1578. The portraiture of these strange people was appended to the latter, shewing their dress, arms, tents, and boats, and was separately intended to be printed in English, though no longer known. The essayist seems to have seen the unusual visitors at Rouen, where he was in attendance on Charles IX., and he personally conversed with one of them at a somewhat later date. Antoine Jacquard executed a series of twelve engravings, which he entitled: "Les divers Pourtraicts et Figures faictes sur les mœurs des habitans du Nouveau Monde." These engravings are sometimes misdescribed as the earliest of the kind. But we perceive that they had been anticipated by the Frobisher volume. The elder Cabot, however, long before Frobisher's time, presented some natives whom he had induced to accompany him from the same continent in 1497 to Henry VII.

[2] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, c. 8.

[3] Idem, *Life of Flaminius*, c. .

[4] Livy, xxxi. 34.

landed,[1] which he called Antarctic France. This discovery of so vast a country seems to be of very great consideration. I cannot be sure, that hereafter there may not be another, so many wiser men than we having been deceived in this. I am afraid our eyes are bigger than our bellies, and that we have more curiosity than capacity; for we grasp at all, but catch nothing but wind.

Plato brings in Solon,[2] telling a story that he had heard from the priests of Sais in Egypt, that of old, and before the Deluge, there was a great island called Atlantis, situate directly at the mouth of the straits of Gibraltar, which contained more countries than both Africa and Asia put together; and that the kings of that country, who not only possessed that Isle, but extended their dominion so far into the continent that they had a country of Africa as far as Egypt, and extending in Europe to Tuscany, attempted to encroach even upon Asia, and to subjugate all the nations that border upon the Mediterranean Sea, as far as the Black Sea; and to that effect overran all Spain, the Gauls, and Italy, so far as to penetrate into Greece, where the Athenians stopped them: but that some time after, both the Athenians, and they and their island, were swallowed by the Flood.

It is very likely that this extreme irruption and inundation of water made wonderful changes and alterations in the habitations of the earth, as 'tis said that the sea then divided Sicily from Italy:—

> "Hæc loca, vi quondam et vastâ convulsa ruina,
> Dissiluisse ferunt, quum protenus utraque tellus
> Una foret"[3]

[1] At Brazil, in 1557. [2] In *Timæus*.

[3] "These lands, they say, formerly with violence and vast desolation convulsed, burst asunder, where before both were one country."—*Æneid*, iii. 414.

—Cyprus from Syria, the isle of Negropont from the continent of Bœotia, and elsewhere united lands that were separate before, by filling up the channel betwixt them with sand and mud:—

> "Sterilisque diu palus, aptaque remis,
> Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum."[1]

But there is no great appearance that this isle was this New World so lately discovered: for that almost touched upon Spain, and it were an incredible effect of an inundation, to have tumbled back so prodigious a mass, above twelve hundred leagues: besides that our modern navigators have already almost discovered it to be no island, but *terra firma*, and continent with the East Indies on the one side, and with the lands under the two poles on the other side; or, if it be separate from them, it is by so narrow a strait and channel, that it none the more deserves the name of an island for that.

It should seem, that in this great body, there are two sorts of motions, the one natural and the other febrific, as there are in ours. When I consider the impression that our river of Dordogne has made in my time on the right bank of its descent, and that in twenty years it has gained so much, and undermined the foundations of so many houses, I perceive it to be an extraordinary agitation: for had it always followed this course, or were hereafter to do it, the aspect of the world would be totally changed. But rivers alter their course, sometimes beating against the one side, and sometimes the other, and sometimes quietly keeping the channel. I do not speak of sudden inundations, the causes of which everybody understands. In Medoc, by the seashore, the Sieur d'Arsac, my brother, sees an estate he had

[1] "The long-time sterile marsh, adapted for ships, feeds neighbouring cities, and feels the heavy plough."—Horace, *De Arte Poeticâ*, v. 65.

there, buried under the sands which the sea vomits before it: where the tops of some houses are yet to be seen, and where his rents and domains are converted into pitiful barren pasturage. The inhabitants of this place affirm, that of late years the sea has driven so vehemently upon them, that they have lost above four leagues of land. These sands are her harbingers: and we now see great heaps of moving sand, that march half a league before her, and occupy the land.

The other testimony from antiquity, to which some would apply this discovery of the New World, is in Aristotle; at least, if that little book of Unheard-of Miracles be his.[1] He there tells us, that certain Carthaginians, having crossed the Atlantic Sea without the Straits of Gibraltar, and sailed a very long time, discovered at last a great and fruitful island, all covered over with wood, and watered with several broad and deep rivers, far remote from all *terra firma*; and that they, and others after them, allured by the goodness and fertility of the soil, went thither with their wives and children, and began to plant a colony. But the senate of Carthage perceiving their people by little and little to diminish, issued out an express prohibition, that none, upon pain of death, should transport themselves thither; and also drove out these new inhabitants; fearing, 'tis said, lest in process of time they should so multiply as to supplant themselves and ruin their state. But this relation of Aristotle no more agrees with our new-found lands than the other.

This man that I had was a plain ignorant fellow, and therefore the more likely to tell truth: for your better-bred sort of men are much more curious in

[1] It is one of the spurious publications brought out under his name.

their observation, 'tis true, and discover a great deal more; but then they gloss upon it, and to give the greater weight to what they deliver, and allure your belief, they cannot forbear a little to alter the story; they never represent things to you simply as they are, but rather as they appeared to them, or as they would have them appear to you, and to gain the reputation of men of judgment, and the better to induce your faith, are willing to help out the business with something more than is really true, of their own invention. Now in this case, we should either have a man of irreproachable veracity, or so simple that he has not wherewithal to contrive, and to give a colour of truth to false relations, and who can have no ends in forging an untruth. Such a one was mine; and besides, he has at divers times brought to me several seamen and merchants who at the same time went the same voyage. I shall therefore content myself with his information, without inquiring what the cosmographers say to the business. We should have topographers to trace out to us the particular places where they have been; but for having had this advantage over us, to have seen the Holy Land, they would have the privilege, forsooth, to tell us stories of all the other parts of the world beside. I would have every one write what he knows, and as much as he knows, but no more; and that not in this only but in all other subjects; for such a person may have some particular knowledge and experience of the nature of such a river, or such a fountain, who, as to other things, knows no more than what everybody does, and yet to give a currency to his little pittance of learning, will undertake to write the whole body of physics: a vice from which great inconveniences derive their original.

Now, to return to my subject, I find that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting, that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country.[1] As, indeed, we have no other level of truth and reason than the example and idea of the opinions and customs of the place wherein we live: there is always the perfect religion, there the perfect government, there the most exact and accomplished usage of all things. They are savages at the same rate that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress; whereas, in truth, we ought rather to call those wild whose natures we have changed by our artifice and diverted from the common order. In those, the genuine, most useful, and natural virtues and properties are vigorous and sprightly, which we have helped to degenerate in these, by accommodating them to the pleasure of our own corrupted palate. And yet for all this, our taste confesses a flavour and delicacy excellent even to emulation of the best of ours, in several fruits wherein those countries abound without art or culture. Neither is it reasonable that art should gain the pre-eminence of our great and powerful mother nature. We have so surcharged her with the additional ornaments and graces we have added to the beauty and riches of her own works by our inventions, that we have almost smothered her; yet in other places, where she shines in her own purity and proper lustre, she marvellously baffles and disgraces all our vain and frivolous attempts:—

[1] The Romans employed this term in the sense of strangers, those who were not Romans.

"Et veniunt hederæ sponte suâ melius;
Surgit et in solis formosior arbutus antris;
Et volucres nullâ dulcius arte canunt."[1]

Our utmost endeavours cannot arrive at so much as to imitate the nest of the least of birds, its contexture, beauty, and convenience: not so much as the web of a poor spider.

All things, says Plato,[2] are produced either by nature, by fortune, or by art; the greatest and most beautiful by the one or the other of the former, the least and the most imperfect by the last.

These nations then seem to me to be so far barbarous, as having received but very little form and fashion from art and human invention, and consequently to be not much remote from their original simplicity. The laws of nature, however, govern them still, not as yet much vitiated with any mixture of ours: but 'tis in such purity, that I am sometimes troubled we were not sooner acquainted with these people, and that they were not discovered in those better times, when there were men much more able to judge of them than we are. I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato had no knowledge of them; for to my apprehension, what we now see in those nations, does not only surpass all the pictures with which the poets have adorned the golden age, and all their inventions in feigning a happy state of man, but, moreover, the fancy and even the wish and desire of philosophy itself; so native and so pure a simplicity, as we by experience see to be in them, could never enter into their

[1] "And the ivy grows best spontaneously, the arbutus best in solitary caves; and the birds sing more sweetly without art."—Propertius, i. 2, 10.

[2] *Laws*, 10.

imagination, nor could they ever believe that human society could have been maintained with so little artifice and human patchwork. I should tell Plato that it is a nation wherein there is no manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name of magistrate or political superiority; no use of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties, no employments, but those of leisure, no respect of kindred, but common, no clothing, no agriculture, no metal, no use of corn or wine; the very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, detraction, pardon, never heard of.[1] How much

[1] This is the famous passage which Shakespear, through Florio's version, 1603, or ed. 1613, p. 102, has employed in the "Tempest," ii. 1. It may be interesting in such a case to compare the essayist with the poet :—

Montaigne. (Book.)	Shakespear. (Act ii. Sc. 1.)
"They [Lycurgus and Plato] could not imagine a genuitie so pure and simple, as we see it by experience, nor ever beleeve our societie might be maintained with so little arte and humane combination. It is a nation, would I answere Plato, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no vse of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation but idle; no respect of kinred, but common; no apparrell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no vse of wine, corne, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulation, covetousness, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. How dissonant	*Gon.* I' the commonwealth I would by contraries Execute all things; for no kind of traffic Would I admit; no name of magistrate; Letters should not be known; riches, poverty, And use of service, none; contract, succession, Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none; No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil; No occupation; all men idle, all; And women too, but innocent and pure; No sovereignty— . . . All things in common nature should produce Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,

would he find his imaginary Republic short of his perfection?—

"Viri a diis recentes."[1]

"Hos natura modos primum dedit."[2]

As to the rest, they live in a country very pleasant and temperate, so that, as my witnesses inform me, 'tis rare to hear of a sick person, and they moreover assure me, that they never saw any of the natives, either paralytic, blear-eyed, toothless, or crooked with age. The situation of their country is along the sea-shore, enclosed on the other side towards the land, with great and high mountains, having about a hundred leagues in breadth between. They have great store of fish and flesh, that have no resemblance to those of ours: which they eat without

would hee finde his imaginary commonwealth from this perfection?

Hos natura modos primum dedit.

Nature at first vprise,
These manners did devise.

Furthermore, they live in a country of so exceeding pleasant and temperate situation, that as my testimonies have tolde me it is very rare to see a sicke body amongst them; and they have further assured me, they never saw any man there, shaking with the palsie, toothlesse, with eyes drooping, or crooked and stooping through age." — Hazlitt's Shakespear's Library, iv. 7.

Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

It is farther to be remarked that Montaigne had not the advantage enjoyed by Shakespear of the suggestion afforded by a rare volume published in English in 1593, a translation from the French by Anthony Munday, entitled, *The Defence of Contraries, Paradoxes against Common Opinion*, which proceeds by way of argumentative thesis on the same idea or principle.

[1] "Men not far removed from the gods."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 90.

[2] "These manners nature first inculcated."—Virgil, *Georgics*, ii. 20.

any other cookery, than plain boiling, roasting, and broiling. The first that rode a horse thither, though in several other voyages he had contracted an acquaintance and familiarity with them, put them into so terrible a fright, with his centaur appearance, that they killed him with their arrows before they could come to discover who he was. Their buildings are very long, and of capacity to hold two or three hundred people, made of the barks of tall trees, reared with one end upon the ground, and leaning to and supporting one another at the top, like some of our barns, of which the covering hangs down to the very ground, and serves for the side walls. They have wood so hard, that they cut with it, and make their swords of it, and their grills of it to broil their meat. Their beds are of cotton, hung swinging from the roof, like our seamen's hammocks, every man his own, for the wives lie apart from their husbands. They rise with the sun, and so soon as they are up, eat for all day, for they have no more meals but that; they do not then drink, as Suidas reports of some other people of the East that never drank at their meals; but drink very often all day after, and sometimes to a rousing pitch. Their drink is made of a certain root, and is of the colour of our claret, and they never drink it but lukewarm. It will not keep above two or three days; it has a somewhat sharp, brisk taste, is nothing heady, but very comfortable to the stomach; laxative to strangers, but a very pleasant beverage to such as are accustomed to it. They make use, instead of bread, of a certain white compound, like coriander seeds; I have tasted of it; the taste is sweet and a little flat. The whole day is spent in dancing. Their young men go a-hunting after wild beasts with bows and arrows; one part of their

women are employed in preparing their drink the while, which is their chief employment. One of their old men, in the morning before they fall to eating, preaches to the whole family, walking from the one end of the house to the other, and several times repeating the same sentence, till he has finished the round, for their houses are at least a hundred yards long. Valour towards their enemies and love towards their wives, are the two heads of his discourse, never failing in the close, to put them in mind, that 'tis their wives who provide them their drink warm and well seasoned. The fashion of their beds, ropes, swords, and of the wooden bracelets they tie about their wrists, when they go to fight, and of the great canes, bored hollow at one end, by the sound of which they keep the cadence of their dances, are to be seen in several places, and amongst others, at my house. They shave all over, and much more neatly than we, without other razor than one of wood or stone. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and that those who have merited well of the gods are lodged in that part of heaven where the sun rises, and the accursed in the west.[1]

They have I know not what kind of priests and prophets, who very rarely present themselves to the people, having their abode in the mountains. At their arrival, there is a great feast, and solemn assembly of many villages: each house, as I have described, makes a village, and they are about a French league distant from one another. This prophet declaims to them in public, exhorting them to virtue and their duty: but all their ethics are comprised in these two articles, resolution in war,

[1] The opposite doctrine to that of the Greeks, who placed in the land of the setting sun the abode of the blessed.

and affection to their wives. He also prophesies to them events to come, and the issues they are to expect from their enterprises, and prompts them to or diverts them from war: but let him look to't; for if he fail in his divination, and anything happen otherwise than he has foretold, he is cut into a thousand pieces, if he be caught, and condemned for a false prophet: for that reason, if any of them has been mistaken, he is no more heard of.

Divination is a gift of God, and therefore to abuse it, ought to be a punishable imposture. Amongst the Scythians, where their diviners failed in the promised effect, they were laid, bound hand and foot, upon carts loaded with firs and bavins, and drawn by oxen, on which they were burned to death.[1] Such as only meddle with things subject to the conduct of human capacity, are excusable in doing the best they can: but those other fellows that come to delude us with assurances of an extraordinary faculty, beyond our understanding, ought they not to be punished, when they do not make good the effect of their promise, and for the temerity of their imposture?

They have continual war with the nations that live further within the mainland, beyond their mountains, to which they go naked, and without other arms than their bows and wooden swords, fashioned at one end like the head of our javelins. The obstinacy of their battles is wonderful, and they never end without great effusion of blood: for as to running away, they know not what it is. Every one for a trophy brings home the head of an enemy he has killed, which he fixes over the door of his house. After having a long time treated their prisoners very well, and given them all the

[1] Herodotus, iv. 69.

regales they can think of, he to whom the prisoner belongs, invites a great assembly of his friends. They being come, he ties a rope to one of the arms of the prisoner, of which, at a distance, out of his reach, he holds the one end himself, and gives to the friend he loves best the other arm to hold after the same manner; which being done, they two, in the presence of all the assembly, despatch him with their swords. After that, they roast him, eat him amongst them, and send some chops to their absent friends. They do not do this, as some think, for nourishment, as the Scythians anciently did, but as a representation of an extreme revenge; as will appear by this: that having observed the Portuguese, who were in league with their enemies, to inflict another sort of death upon any of them they took prisoners, which was to set them up to the girdle in the earth, to shoot at the remaining part till it was stuck full of arrows, and then to hang them, they thought those people of the other world (as being men who had sown the knowledge of a great many vices amongst their neighbours, and who were much greater masters in all sorts of mischief than they) did not exercise this sort of revenge without a meaning, and that it must needs be more painful than theirs, they began to leave their old way, and to follow this. I am not sorry that we should here take notice of the barbarous horror of so cruel an action, but that, seeing so clearly into their faults, we should be so blind to our own. I conceive there is more barbarity in eating a man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a body limb from limb by racks and torments, that is yet in perfect sense; in roasting it by degrees; in causing it to be bitten and worried by dogs and swine (as we have not only read, but lately seen, not amongst inveterate

and mortal enemies, but among neighbours and fellow-citizens, and, which is worse, under colour of piety and religion), than to roast and eat him after he is dead.

Chrysippus and Zeno, the two heads of the Stoic sect, were of opinion that there was no hurt in making use of our dead carcasses, in what way soever for our necessity, and in feeding upon them too[1]; as our own ancestors, who being besieged by Cæsar in the city Alexia, resolved to sustain the famine of the siege with the bodies of their old men, women, and other persons who were incapable of bearing arms:—

> "Vascones, ut fama est, alimentis talibus usi
> Produxere animas."[2]

And the physicians make no bones of employing it to all sorts of use, either to apply it outwardly; or to give it inwardly for the health of the patient. But there never was any opinion so irregular, as to excuse treachery, disloyalty, tyranny, and cruelty, which are our familiar vices. We may then call these people barbarous, in respect to the rules of reason: but not in respect to ourselves, who in all sorts of barbarity exceed them. Their wars are throughout noble and generous, and carry as much excuse and fair pretence, as that human malady is capable of; having with them no other foundation than the sole jealousy of valour. Their disputes are not for the conquest of new lands, for these they already possess are so fruitful by nature, as to supply them without labour or concern, with all things necessary, in such abundance that they have no need to enlarge their borders. And they are,

[1] Diogenes Laertius, vii. 188.

[2] Juvenal, *Sat.*, xv. 93. Alexia or Alesia, Alise. The Vascones, as the tradition is, with such aliment prolonged their lives.

moreover, happy in this, that they only covet so much as their natural necessities require: all beyond that is superfluous to them: men of the same age call one another generally brothers, those who are younger, children; and the old men are fathers to all. These leave to their heirs in common the full possession of goods, without any manner of division, or other title than what nature bestows upon her creatures, in bringing them into the world. If their neighbours pass over the mountains to assault them, and obtain a victory, all the victors gain by it is glory only, and the advantage of having proved themselves the better in valour and virtue: for they never meddle with the goods of the conquered, but presently return into their own country, where they have no want of anything necessary, nor of this greatest of all goods, to know happily how to enjoy their condition and to be content. And those in turn do the same; they demand of their prisoners no other ransom, than acknowledgment that they are overcome: but there is not one found in an age, who will not rather choose to die than make such a confession, or either by word or look recede from the entire grandeur of an invincible courage. There is not a man amongst them who had not rather be killed and eaten, than so much as to open his mouth to entreat he may not. They use them with all liberality and freedom, to the end their lives may be so much the dearer to them; but frequently entertain them with menaces of their approaching death, of the torments they are to suffer, of the preparations making in order to it, of the mangling their limbs, and of the feast that is to be made, where their carcass is to be the only dish. All which they do, to no other end, but only to extort some gentle or submissive word from them, or to frighten

them so as to make them run away, to obtain this advantage that they were terrified, and that their constancy was shaken; and indeed, if rightly taken, it is in this point only that a true victory consists:—

"Victoria nulla est,
Quam quæ confessos animo quoque subjugat hostes." [1]

The Hungarians, a very warlike people, never pretend further than to reduce the enemy to their discretion; for having forced this confession from them, they let them go without injury or ransom, excepting, at the most, to make them engage their word never to bear arms against them again. We have sufficient advantages over our enemies that are borrowed and not truly our own; it is the quality of a porter, and no effect of virtue, to have stronger arms and legs; it is a dead and corporeal quality to set in array; 'tis a turn of fortune to make our enemy stumble, or to dazzle him with the light of the sun; 'tis a trick of science and art, and that may happen in a mean base fellow, to be a good fencer. The estimate and value of a man consist in the heart and in the will: there his true honour lies. Valour is stability, not of legs and arms, but of the courage and the soul; it does not lie in the goodness of our horse or our arms: but in our own. He that falls obstinate in his courage—

"Si succiderit, de genu pugnat" [2]

—he who, for any danger of imminent death, abates nothing of his assurance; who, dying, yet darts at his enemy a fierce and disdainful look, is

[1] "No victory is complete, which the conquered do not admit to be so."—Claudius, *De Sexto Consulatu Honorii*, v. 248.

[2] "If he falls, he fights from his knee."—Seneca, *De Providentiâ*, c. 2.

overcome not by us, but by fortune[1]; he is killed, not conquered; the most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate. There are defeats more triumphant than victories. Never could those four sister victories, the fairest the sun ever beheld, of Salamis, Platæa, Mycale, and Sicily, venture to oppose all their united glories, to the single glory of the discomfiture of King Leonidas and his men, at the pass of Thermopylæ. Whoever ran with a more glorious desire and greater ambition, to the winning, than Captain Iscolas to the certain loss of a battle?[2] Who could have found out a more subtle invention to secure his safety, than he did to assure his destruction? He was set to defend a certain pass of Peloponnesus against the Arcadians, which, considering the nature of the place and the inequality of forces, finding it utterly impossible for him to do, and seeing that all who were presented to the enemy, must certainly be left upon the place; and on the other side, reputing it unworthy of his own virtue and magnanimity and of the Lacedæmonian name to fail in any part of his duty, he chose a mean betwixt these two extremes after this manner; the youngest and most active of his men, he preserved for the service and defence of their country, and sent them back; and with the rest, whose loss would be of less consideration, he resolved to make good the pass, and with the death of them, to make the enemy buy their entry as dear as possibly he could; as it fell out, for being presently environed on all sides by the Arcadians, after having made a great slaughter of the enemy, he and his were all cut in pieces. Is there any trophy dedicated to

[1] Seneca, *De Constantiâ Sapientis*, c. 6.
[2] Diodorus Siculus, xv. 64.

the conquerors which was not much more due to these who were overcome? The part that true conquering is to play, lies in the encounter, not in the coming off; and the honour of valour consists in fighting, not in subduing.

But to return to my story: these prisoners are so far from discovering the least weakness, for all the terrors that can be represented to them, that, on the contrary, during the two or three months they are kept,[1] they always appear with a cheerful countenance; importune their masters to make haste to bring them to the test, defy, rail at them, and reproach them with cowardice, and the number of battles they have lost against those of their country. I have a song made by one of these prisoners, wherein he bids them "come all, and dine upon him, and welcome, for they shall withal eat their own fathers and grandfathers, whose flesh has served to feed and nourish him. These muscles," says he, "this flesh and these veins, are your own: poor silly souls as you are, you little think that the substance of your ancestors' limbs is here yet; notice what you eat, and you will find in it the taste of your own flesh"[2]: in which song there is to be observed an invention that nothing relishes of the barbarian. Those that paint these people dying after this manner, represent the prisoner spitting in the faces of his executioners and making wry mouths at them. And 'tis most certain, that to the very last gasp, they never cease to brave and defy them both in word and gesture.

[1] "This reminds us of a passage in Robinson Crusoe, where the hero is offered certain fatted prisoners, whom he takes away under pretence to eat them, and gives them their liberty.

[2] Herodotus reports of certain Scythians that among them it was accounted the highest mark of respect which they could pay to their parents to eat them when they attained old age.

In plain truth, these men are very savage in comparison of us; of necessity, they must either be absolutely so or else we are savages; for there is a vast difference betwixt their manners and ours.

The men there have several wives, and so much the greater number, by how much they have the greater reputation for valour. And it is one very remarkable feature in their marriages, that the same jealousy our wives have to hinder and divert us from the friendship and familiarity of other women, those employ to promote their husbands' desires, and to procure them many spouses; for being above all things solicitous of their husbands' honour, 'tis their chiefest care to seek out, and to bring in the most companions they can, forasmuch as it is a testimony of the husband's virtue. Most of our ladies will cry out, that 'tis monstrous; whereas in truth it is not so, but a truly matrimonial virtue, and of the highest form. In the Bible, Sarah, with Leah and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, gave the most beautiful of their handmaids to their husbands; Livia preferred the passions of Augustus to her own interest[1]; and the wife of King Deiotarus, Stratonice, did not only give up a fair young maid that served her to her husband's embraces, but moreover carefully brought up the children he had by her, and assisted them in the succession to their father's crown.

And that it may not be supposed, that all this is done by a simple and servile obligation to their common practice, or by any authoritative impression of their ancient custom, without judgment or reasoning, and from having a soul so stupid that it cannot contrive what else to do, I must here give you some touches of their sufficiency in

[1] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, c. 71.

point of understanding. Besides what I repeated to you before, which was one of their songs of war, I have another, a love-song, that begins thus: "Stay, adder, stay, that by thy pattern my sister may draw the fashion and work of a rich ribbon, that I may present to my beloved, by which means thy beauty and the excellent order of thy scales shall for ever be preferred before all other serpents." Wherein the first couplet, "Stay, adder," &c., makes the burden of the song. Now I have conversed enough with poetry to judge thus much: that not only there is nothing barbarous in this invention, but, moreover, that it is perfectly Anacreontic. To which it may be added, that their language is soft, of a pleasing accent, and something bordering upon the Greek termination.

Three of these people, not foreseeing how dear their knowledge of the corruptions of this part of the world will one day cost their happiness and repose, and that the effect of this commerce will be their ruin, as I presuppose it is in a very fair way (miserable men to suffer themselves to be deluded with desire of novelty and to have left the serenity of their own heaven to come so far to gaze at ours!), were at Rouen at the time that the late King Charles IX. was there. The king himself talked to them a good while, and they were made to see our fashions, our pomp, and the form of a great city. After which, some one asked their opinion, and would know of them, what of all the things they had seen, they found most to be admired? To which they made answer, three things, of which I have forgotten the third, and am troubled at it, but two I yet remember. They said, that in the first place they thought it very strange that so many tall men, wearing beards,

strong, and well armed, who were about the king ('tis like they meant the Swiss of the guard), should submit to obey a child, and that they did not rather choose out one amongst themselves to command. Secondly (they have a way of speaking in their language to call men the half of one another), that they had observed that there were amongst us men full and crammed with all manner of commodities, whilst, in the meantime, their halves were begging at their doors, lean and half-starved with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these necessitous halves were able to suffer so great an inequality and injustice, and that they did not take the others by the throats, or set fire to their houses.

I talked to one of them a great while together, but I had so ill an interpreter, and one who was so perplexed by his own ignorance to apprehend my meaning, that I could get nothing out of him of any moment. Asking him what advantage he reaped from the superiority he had amongst his own people (for he was a captain, and our mariners called him king), he told me, to march at the head of them to war. Demanding of him further how many men he had to follow him, he showed me a space of ground, to signify as many as could march in such a compass, which might be four or five thousand men; and putting the question to him whether or no his authority expired with the war, he told me this remained: that when he went to visit the villages of his dependence, they planed him paths through the thick of their woods, by which he might pass at his ease. All this does not sound very ill, and the last was not at all amiss, for they wear no breeches.

CHAPTER XXXI

THAT IT IS MEET TO INTERVENE DISCREETLY IN JUDGING THE DIVINE ORDINANCES

The true field and subject of imposture are things unknown, forasmuch as, in the first place, their very strangeness lends them credit, and moreover, by not being subjected to our ordinary reasons, they deprive us of the means to question and dispute them. For which reason, says Plato,[1] it is much more easy to satisfy the hearers, when speaking of the nature of the gods than of the nature of men, because the ignorance of the auditory affords a fair and large career and all manner of liberty in the handling of abstruse things. Thence it comes to pass, that nothing is so firmly believed, as what we least know; nor any people so confident, as those who entertain us with fables, such as your alchemists, judicial astrologers, fortune-tellers, and physicians[2]:—

"Id genus omne."[3]

To which I would willingly, if I durst, join a pack of people that take upon them to interpret and control the designs of God Himself, pretending to find out the cause of every accident, and to pry into the secrets of the divine will, there to discover the incomprehensible motive, of His works; and

[1] In *Critias*.

[2] It must be borne in mind that not only in the time of Montaigne, but in the later days of Molière, the general body of so-called physicians were mere empirics and charlatans. It was the same in England, as Turner shews in the Introduction to his *Herbal*, 1568. We have not so greatly advanced.

[3] "All that sort of people."—Horace, *Sat.*, i. 2, 2.

although the variety, and the continual discordance of events, throw them from corner to corner, and toss them from east to west, yet do they still persist in their vain inquisition, and with the same pencil to paint black and white.

In a nation of the Indies, there is this commendable custom, that when anything befalls them amiss in any encounter or battle, they publicly ask pardon of the sun, who is their god, as having committed an unjust action, always imputing their good or evil fortune to the divine justice, and to that submitting their own judgment and reason. 'Tis enough for a Christian to believe that all things come from God, to receive them with acknowledgment of His divine and inscrutable wisdom, and also thankfully to accept and receive them, with what face soever they may present themselves. But I do not approve of what I see in use, that is, to seek to affirm and support our religion by the prosperity of our enterprises. Our belief has other foundation enough, without going about to authorise it by events: for the people being accustomed to such plausible arguments as these and so proper to their taste, it is to be feared, lest when they fail of success they should also stagger in their faith: as in the war wherein we are now engaged upon the account of religion, those who had the better in the business of Rochelabeille,[1] making great brags of that success as an infallible approbation of their cause, when they came afterwards to excuse their misfortunes of Moncontour and Jarnac,[2] by saying they were fatherly scourges and corrections that they had not a people wholly at their mercy, they make it manifestly enough appear, what it is to take two sorts of grist out of the same sack, and with the

[1] In May 1569. [2] In 1569.

same mouth to blow hot and cold. It were better to possess the vulgar with the solid and real foundations of truth. 'Twas a fine naval battle that was gained under the command of Don John of Austria a few months since[1] against the Turks; but it has also pleased God at other times to let us see as great victories at our own expense. In fine, 'tis a hard matter to reduce divine things to our balance, without waste and losing a great deal of the weight. And who would take upon him to give a reason that Arius and his Pope Leo, the principal heads of the Arian heresy, should die, at several times, of so like and strange deaths (for being withdrawn from the disputation by a griping in the bowels, they both of them suddenly gave up the ghost upon the stool), and would aggravate this divine vengeance by the circumstances of the place, might as well add the death of Heliogabalus, who was also slain in a house of office. And, indeed, Irenæus was involved in the same fortune. God, being pleased to show us, that the good have something else to hope for and the wicked something else to fear, than the fortunes or misfortunes of this world, manages and applies these according to His own occult will and pleasure, and deprives us of the means foolishly to make thereof our own profit. And those people abuse themselves who will pretend to dive into these mysteries by the strength of human reason. They never give one hit that they do not receive two for it; of which St. Augustine makes out a great proof upon his adversaries. 'Tis a conflict that is more decided by strength of memory than by the force of reason. We are to content ourselves with the light it pleases the sun to communicate to us, by virtue of his rays;

[1] That of Lepanto, October 7, 1571.

and who will lift up his eyes to take in a greater, let him not think it strange, if for the reward of his presumption, he there lose his sight.

"Quis hominum potest scire consilium Dei? aut quis poterit cogitare quid velit Dominus?"[1]

CHAPTER XXXII

TO AVOID PLEASURES AT THE EXPENSE OF LIFE

I HAD long ago observed most of the opinions of the ancients to concur in this, that it is high time to die when there is more ill than good in living, and that to preserve life to our own torment and inconvenience is contrary to the very rules of nature, as these old laws instruct us.

Ἢ ζῆν ἀλύπως, ἢ θανεῖν εὐδαιμόνως.
Καλὸν τὸ θνησκειν οἷς ὑβριν τὸ ζῆν φέρει.
Κρεισσον τὸ μὴ ζῆν ἐστιν, ἢ ζῆν ἀθλίως.[2]

But to push this contempt of death so far as to employ it to the removing our thoughts from the honours, riches, dignities, and other favours and goods, as we call them, of fortune, as if reason were not sufficient to persuade us to avoid them, without adding this new injunction, I had never seen it either commanded or practised, till this passage of Seneca[3] fell into my hands; who advising Lucilius, a man of great power and authority about the emperor, to alter his voluptuous and magnificent way of living, and to retire himself

[1] "Who of men can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is?"—*Book of Wisdom*, ix. 13.

[2] "Either tranquil life, or happy death. It is well to die when life is wearisome. It is better to die than to live miserable."—Stobæus, *Serm.* xx.

[3] *Ep.* 22.

from this worldly vanity and ambition, to some solitary, quiet, and philosophical life, and the other alleging some difficulties: "I am of opinion," says he, "either that thou leave that life of thine, or life itself; I would, indeed, advise thee to the gentle way, and to untie, rather than to break, the knot thou hast indiscreetly knit, provided, that if it be not otherwise to be untied, thou resolutely break it. There is no man so great a coward, that had not rather once fall than to be always falling." I should have found this counsel conformable enough to the Stoical roughness: but it appears the more strange, for being borrowed from Epicurus, who writes the same thing upon the like occasion to Idomeneus. And I think I have observed something like it, but with Christian moderation, amongst our own people.

St. Hilary, Bishop of Poictiers, that famous enemy of the Arian heresy, being in Syria, had intelligence thither sent him, that Abra, his only daughter, whom he left at home under the eye and tuition of her mother, was sought in marriage by the greatest noblemen of the country, as being a virgin virtuously brought up, fair, rich, and in the flower of her age; whereupon he wrote to her (as appears upon record), that she should remove her affection from all the pleasures and advantages proposed to her; for that he had in his travels found out a much greater and more worthy fortune for her, a husband of much greater power and magnificence, who would present her with robes and jewels of inestimable value; wherein his design was to dispossess her of the appetite and use of worldly delights, to join her wholly to God; but the nearest and most certain way to this, being, as he conceived, the death of his daughter; he never

ceased, by vows, prayers, and orisons, to beg of the Almighty, that He would please to call her out of this world, and to take her to Himself; as accordingly it came to pass; for soon after his return, she died, at which he expressed a singular joy. This seems to outdo the other, forasmuch as he applies himself to this means at the outset, which they only take subsidiarily; and, besides, it was towards his only daughter. But I will not omit the latter end of this story, though it be for my purpose; St. Hilary's wife, having understood from him how the death of their daughter was brought about by his desire and design, and how much happier she was to be removed out of this world than to have stayed in it, conceived so vivid an apprehension of the eternal and heavenly beatitude, that she begged of her husband, with the extremest importunity, to do as much for her; and God, at their joint request, shortly after calling her to Him, it was a death embraced with singular and mutual content.

CHAPTER XXXIII

FORTUNE IS OFTENTIMES MET WITH IN THE TRAIN OF REASON

THE inconstancy and various motions of Fortune[1] may reasonably make us expect she should present us with all sorts of faces. Can there be a more express act of justice than this? The Duc de

[1] The term *Fortune*, so often employed by Montaigne, and in passages where he might have used *Providence*, was censured by the doctors who examined his Essays when he was at Rome in 1581. See his Travels, i. 35 and 76.

Valentinois,[1] having resolved to poison Adrian, Cardinal of Corneto, with whom Pope Alexander VI., his father and himself, were to sup in the Vatican, he sent before a bottle of poisoned wine, and withal, strict order to the butler to keep it very safe. The Pope being come before his son, and calling for drink, the butler supposing this wine had not been so strictly recommended to his care, but only upon the account of its excellency, presented it forthwith to the Pope, and the duke himself coming in presently after, and being confident they had not meddled with his bottle, took also his cup; so that the father died immediately upon the spot, and the son, after having been long tormented with sickness, was reserved to another and a worse fortune.[2]

Sometimes she seems to play upon us, just in the nick of an affair; Monsieur d'Estrées, at that time ensign to Monsieur de Vendôme, and Monsieur de Licques, lieutenant in the company of the Duc d'Ascot, being both pretenders to the Sieur de Fougueselles' sister,[3] though of several parties (as it oft falls out amongst frontier neighbours), the Sieur de Licques carried her; but on the same day he was married, and which was worse, before he went to bed to his wife, the bridegroom having a mind to break a lance in honour of his new bride, went out to skirmish near St. Omer, where the Sieur d'Estrées proving the stronger, took him prisoner, and the more to illustrate his victory, the lady was fain

> "Conjugis ante coacta novi dimittere collum,
> Quam veniens una atque altera rursus hyems
> Noctibus in longis avidum saturasset amorem," . . .[4]

[1] Cæsar Borgia. [2] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, lib. vi.
[3] Martin du Bellay, *Mem.*, ii.
[4] "Compelled to abstain from embracing her new spouse in her arms before two winters pass in succession, during their long nights had satiated her eager love."—Catullus, lxviii. 81.

—to request him of courtesy, to deliver up his prisoner to her, as he accordingly did, the gentlemen of France never denying anything to ladies.

Does she not seem to be an artist here? Constantine, son of Helena,[1] founded the empire of Constantinople, and so many ages after, Constantine, the son of Helen, put an end to it. Sometimes she is pleased to emulate our miracles: we are told, that King Clovis besieging Angoulême, the walls fell down of themselves by divine favour! and Bouchet has it from some author, that King Robert having sat down before a city, and being stolen away from the siege to go keep the feast of St. Aignan at Orleans, as he was in devotion at a certain part of the Mass, the walls of the beleaguered city, without any manner of violence, fell down with a sudden ruin. But she did quite contrary in our Milan wars; for, le Capitaine Rense laying siege for us to the city Arona,[2] and having carried a mine under a great part of the wall, the mine being sprung, the wall was lifted from its base, but dropped down again nevertheless, whole and entire, and so exactly upon its foundation, that the besieged suffered no inconvenience by that attempt.

Sometimes she plays the physician. Jason of Pheres[3] being given over by the physicians, by reason of an imposthume in his breast, having a mind to rid himself of his pain, by death at least, threw himself in a battle desperately into the thickest of the enemy, where he was so fortunately wounded quite through the body, that the imposthume broke,

[1] The Empress Helena.

[2] Martin du Bellay, *Mem.*, liv. ii., fol. 86.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, vii. 50. The mythic Jason had an uncle Pherés; but as to this case of an imposthume or αποστημα, mentioned by Pliny, I cannot speak.

and he was perfectly cured. Did she not also excel the painter Protogenes in his art? who[1] having finished the picture of a dog quite tired and out of breath, in all the other parts excellently well to his own liking, but not being able to express, as he would, the slaver and foam that should come out of its mouth, vexed and angry at his work, he took his sponge, which by cleaning his pencils had imbibed several sorts of colours, and threw it in a rage against the picture, with an intent utterly to deface it; when fortune guiding the sponge to hit just upon the mouth of the dog, it there performed what all his art was not able to do. Does she not sometimes direct our counsels and correct them? Isabel, Queen of England, having to sail from Zeeland into her own kingdom,[2] with an army, in favour of her son against her husband, had been lost, had she come into the port she intended, being there laid wait for by the enemy; but fortune, against her will, threw her into another haven, where she landed in safety. And that man of old who, throwing a stone at a dog, hit and killed his mother-in-law, had he not reason to pronounce this verse:—

Ταυτόματον ἡμῶν χαλλίω βουλεύεται[3];

Fortune is better advised than us. Icetes had contracted with two soldiers to kill Timoleon at Adrana in Sicily.[4] They took their time to do it when he was assisting at a sacrifice, and thrusting into the crowd, as they were making signs to one another, that now was a fit time to do their business, in steps a third, who, with a stroke of a sword, lays

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxxv. 10.
[2] In 1326.
[3] "Fortune has more judgment than we."—Menander.
[4] Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon*, c. 7.

him dead upon the place and runs away. The companion, concluding himself discovered and lost, runs to the altar and begs for mercy, promising to discover the whole truth, which as he was doing, and laying open the full conspiracy, behold the third man, who being apprehended, was, as a murderer, thrust and hauled by the people through the press, towards Timoleon, and the other most eminent persons of the assembly, before whom being brought, he cries out for pardon, pleading that he had justly slain his father's murderer; which he, also, proving upon the spot, by sufficient witnesses, whom his good fortune very opportunely supplied him withal, that his father was really killed in the city of Leontini, by that very man on whom he had taken his revenge, he was presently awarded ten Attic[1] minæ, for having had the good fortune, by designing to revenge the death of his father, to preserve the life of the common father of Sicily. Fortune, truly, in her conduct surpasses all the rules of human prudence.

But to conclude: is there not a direct application of her favour, bounty, and piety manifestly discovered in this action? Ignatius the father and Ignatius the son being proscribed by the triumvirs of Rome, resolved upon this generous act of mutual kindness, to fall by the hands of one another, and by that means to frustrate and defeat the cruelty of the tyrants; and accordingly with their swords drawn, ran full drive upon one another, where fortune so guided the points, that they made two equally mortal wounds, affording withal so much honour to so brave a friendship, as to leave them just strength enough to draw out their bloody swords, that they might have liberty to embrace

[1] The old Attic mina was seventy-five drachmai.

one another in this dying condition, with so close and hearty an embrace, that the executioner cut off both their heads at once, leaving the bodies still fast linked together in this noble bond, and their wounds joined mouth to mouth, affectionately sucking in the last blood and remainder of the lives of each other.

CHAPTER XXXIV

OF A DEFECT IN OUR GOVERNMENT

My late father, a man that had no other advantages than experience and his own natural parts, was nevertheless of a very clear judgment, formerly told me that he once had thoughts of endeavouring to introduce this practice; that there might be in every city a certain place assigned to which such as stood in need of anything might repair, and have their business entered by an officer appointed for that purpose.[1] As for example: I want a chapman to buy my pearls; I want one that has pearls to sell; such a one wants company to go to Paris; such a one seeks a servant of such a quality; such a one a master; such a one such an artificer; some inquiring for one thing, some for another, every one according to what he wants. And doubtless, these mutual advertisements would be of no contemptible advantage to the public correspondence and intelligence: for there are evermore conditions that hunt after one another, and for want of knowing one another's occasions leave men in very great necessity.

[1] An early proposal for a mart and exchange.

I have heard, to the great shame of the age we live in, that in our very sight two most excellent men for learning died so poor that they had scarce bread to put in their mouths: Lilius Gregorius Giraldus in Italy and Sebastianus Castalio in Germany: and I believe there are a thousand men would have invited them into their families, with very advantageous conditions, or have relieved them where they were, had they known their wants. The world is not so generally corrupted, but that I know a man that would heartily wish the estate his ancestors have left him might be employed, so long as it shall please fortune to give him leave to enjoy it, to secure rare and remarkable persons of any kind, whom misfortune sometimes persecutes to the last degree, from the dangers of necessity; and at least place them in such a condition that they must be very hard to please, if they are not contented.

My father in his domestic economy had this rule (which I know how to commend, but by no means to imitate), namely, that besides the day-book or memorial of household affairs, where the small accounts, payments, and disbursements, which do not require a secretary's hand, were entered, and which a steward always had in custody, he ordered him whom he employed to write for him, to keep a journal, and in it to set down all the remarkable occurrences, and daily memorials of the history of his house: very pleasant to look over, when time begins to wear things out of memory, and very useful sometimes to put us out of doubt when such a thing was begun, when ended; what visitors came, and when they went; our travels, absences, marriages, and deaths; the reception of good or ill news; the change of principal servants, and

the like. An ancient custom, which I think it would not be amiss for every one to revive in his own house; and I find I did very foolishly in neglecting it.

CHAPTER XXXV

OF THE CUSTOM OF CLOTHING ONESELF [1]

Whatever I shall say upon this subject, I am of necessity to invade some of the bounds of custom, so careful has she been to shut up all the avenues. I was disputing with myself in this shivering season, whether the fashion of going naked in those nations lately discovered is imposed upon them by the hot temperature of the air, as we say of the Indians and Moors, or whether it be the original fashion of mankind. Men of understanding, forasmuch as all things under the sun, as the Holy Writ declares, are subject to the same laws, were wont in such considerations as these, where we are to distinguish the natural laws from those which have been imposed by man's invention, to have recourse to the general polity of the world, where there can be nothing counterfeit. Now, all elsewhere being exactly furnished with needle and thread for the support of existence, it is incredible that we only are brought into the world in a defective and indigent condition, and in such a state as cannot subsist without external aid. Therefore it is that I believe, that as plants, trees, and animals, and all things that have life, are seen to be by nature

[1] Some passages of this paper may be read with Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. But Montaigne has not gone so far below the surface here as he usually does.

sufficiently clothed and covered, to defend them from the injuries of weather:—

> "Proptereaque fere res omnes aut corio sunt,
> Aut setâ, aut conchis, aut callo, aut cortice tectæ,"[1]

so were we: but as those who by artificial light put out that of day, so we by borrowed forms and fashions have destroyed our own. And 'tis plain enough to be seen, that 'tis custom only which renders that impossible that otherwise is nothing so; for of those nations who have no manner of knowledge of clothing, some are situated under the same temperature that we are, and some in much colder climates. And besides, our most tender parts are always exposed to the air, as the eyes, mouth, nose, and ears; and our country labourers, like our ancestors in former times, go with their breasts and bellies open. Had we been born with a necessity upon us of wearing petticoats and breeches, there is no doubt but nature would have fortified those parts she intended should be exposed to the fury of the seasons with a thicker skin, as she has done the finger-ends and the soles of the feet. And why should this seem hard to believe? I observe much greater distance betwixt my habit and that of one of our country boors, than betwixt his and that of a man who has no other covering but his skin. How many men, especially in Turkey, go naked upon the account of devotion? Some one asked a beggar, whom he saw in his shirt in the depth of winter, as brisk and frolic as he who goes muffled up to the ears in furs, how he was able to endure to go so? "Why, sir," he answered, "you go with your face bare: I am

[1] "And that for this reason nearly all things are clothed with skin, or hair, or shells, or bark, or some such thing."—Lucretius, iv. 936.

all face." The Italians have a story of the Duke of Florence's fool, whom his master asking how, being so thinly clad, he was able to support the cold, when he himself, warmly wrapped up as he was, was hardly able to do it? "Why," replied the fool, "use my receipt to put on all your clothes you have at once, and you'll feel no more cold than I." King Massinissa,[1] to an extreme old age, could never be prevailed upon to go with his head covered, how cold, stormy, or rainy soever the weather might be; which also is reported of the Emperor Severus. Herodotus tells us,[2] that in the battles fought betwixt the Egyptians and the Persians, it was observed both by himself and by others, that of those who were left dead upon the field, the heads of the Egyptians were without comparison harder than those of the Persians, by reason that the last had gone with their heads always covered from their infancy, first with biggins, and then with turbans, and the others always shaved and bare. King Agesilaus continued to a decrepit age to wear always the same clothes in winter that he did in summer.[3] Cæsar, says Suetonius,[4] marched always at the head of his army, for the most part on foot, with his head bare, whether it was rain or sunshine, and as much is said of Hannibal:—

"Tum vertice nudo,
Excipere insanos imbres, cœlique ruinam."[5]

A Venetian who has long lived in Pegu, and has lately returned thence, writes that the men and women of that kingdom, though they cover all their other parts, go always barefoot and ride so

[1] Cicero, *De Senectute*, c. 10.
[2] iii. 12.
[3] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*.
[4] *Ibid.*, c. 58.
[5] "Bareheaded he marched in snow, exposed to pouring rain and the utmost rigour of the weather."—Silius Italicus, i. 250.

too; and Plato very earnestly advises for the health of the whole body, to give the head and the feet no other clothing than what nature has bestowed. He whom the Poles have elected for their king,[1] since ours came thence, who[2] is, indeed, one of the greatest princes of this age, never wears any gloves, and in winter or whatever weather can come, never wears other cap abroad than that he wears at home. Whereas I cannot endure to go unbuttoned or untied; my neighbouring labourers would think themselves in chains, if they were so braced. Varro[3] is of opinion, that when it was ordained we should be bare in the presence of the gods and before the magistrate, it was so ordered rather upon the score of health, and to inure us to the injuries of weather, than upon the account of reverence; and since we are now talking of cold, and Frenchmen used to wear variety of colours (not I myself, for I seldom wear other than black or white, in imitation of my father), let us add another story out of Le Capitaine Martin du Bellay, who affirms,[4] that in the march to Luxembourg he saw so great frost, that the munition-wine was cut with hatchets and wedges, and delivered out to the soldiers by weight, and that they carried it away in baskets: and Ovid:—

> "Nudaque consistunt, formam servantia testæ,
> Vina; nec hausta meri, sed data frusta, bibunt."[5]

At the mouth of Lake Mæotis the frosts are so very sharp, that in the very same place where

[1] Stephen Bathory, Waiwode of Transylvania, so elected after the succession of Henry III. to the throne of France in 1574.

[2] *I.e.*, Bathory, and not Henry III.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxviii. 6.

[4] In 1543, Martin du Bellay, *Mém.*, liv. x., fol. 478.

[5] "The wine when out of the cask retains the form of the cask; and is given out not in cups, but in bits."—Ovid, *Trist.*, iii. 10, 23.

Mithridates' lieutenant had fought the enemy dry-foot and given them a notable defeat, the summer following he obtained over them a naval victory. The Romans fought at a very great disadvantage, in the engagement they had with the Carthaginians near Piacenza, by reason that they went to the charge with their blood congealed and their limbs numbed with cold, whereas Hannibal had caused great fires to be dispersed quite through his camp to warm his soldiers, and oil to be distributed amongst them, to the end that anointing themselves, they might render their nerves more supple and active, and fortify the pores against the violence of the air and freezing wind, which raged in that season.[1]

The retreat the Greeks made from Babylon into their own country is famous for the difficulties and calamities they had to overcome; of which this was one, that being encountered in the mountains of Armenia with a horrible storm of snow, they lost all knowledge of the country and of the ways, and being driven up, were a day and a night without eating or drinking; most of their cattle died, many of themselves were starved to death, several struck blind with the force of the hail and the glare of the snow, many of them maimed in their fingers and toes, and many stiff and motionless with the extremity of the cold, who had yet their understanding entire.[2]

Alexander saw a nation, where they bury their fruit-trees in winter to protect them from being destroyed by the frost,[3] and we also may see the same.

But, so far as clothes go, the King of Mexico

[1] Livy, xx. 54.
[2] Xenophon, *Exp. of Cyrus*, iv. 5.
[3] Quintus Curtius, vii. 3.

changed four times a day his apparel, and never put it on again, employing that he left off in his continual liberalities and rewards; and neither pot, dish, nor other utensil of his kitchen or table was ever served twice.

CHAPTER XXXVI

OF CATO THE YOUNGER

I[1] AM not guilty of the common error of judging another by myself. I easily believe that in another's humour which is contrary to my own; and though I find myself engaged to one certain form, I do not oblige others to it, as many do; but believe and apprehend a thousand ways of living; and, contrary to most men, more easily admit of difference than uniformity amongst us. I as frankly as any one would have me, discharge a man from my humours and principles, and consider him according to his own particular model. Though I am not continent myself, I nevertheless sincerely approve the continence of the Feuillans and Capuchins, and highly commend their way of living. I insinuate myself by imagination into their place, and love and honour them the more for being other than I am. I very much desire that we may be judged every man by himself, and would not be drawn into the consequence of common examples. My own weakness

[1] "I am not possessed with this common errour, to judge of others according to what I am my selfe. I am easie to beleeve things differing from my selfe. Though I be engaged to one forme, I do not tie the world vnto it, as every man doth. And I beleeve and conceive a thousand manners of life, contrary to the common sorte."—Florio, ed. 1613, p. 113.

nothing alters the esteem I ought to have for the force and vigour of those who deserve it :—

"Sunt qui nihil suadent, quam quod se imitari posse confidunt."[1]

Crawling upon the slime of the earth, I do not for all that cease to observe up in the clouds the inimitable height of some heroic souls. 'Tis a great deal for me to have my judgment regular and just, if the effects cannot be so, and to maintain this sovereign part, at least, free from corruption : 'tis something to have my will right and good where my legs fail me. This age wherein we live, in our part of the world at least, is grown so stupid, that not only the exercise, but the very imagination of virtue is defective, and seems to be no other but college jargon :—

"Virtutem verba putant, ut
Lucum ligna"[2] :

"Quam vereri deberent, etiam si percipere non possent."[3]

'Tis a gewgaw to hang in a cabinet or at the end of the tongue, as on the tip of the ear, for ornament only. There are no longer virtuous actions extant ; those actions that carry a show of virtue have yet nothing of its essence ; by reason that profit, glory, fear, custom, and other suchlike foreign causes, put us on the way to produce them. Our justice also, valour, courtesy, may be called so too, in respect to others and according to the face they appear with to the public ; but in the doer it can by no means be virtue, because there is another end

[1] "There are who persuade nothing but what they believe they can imitate themselves."—Cicero, *De Orator.*, c. 7.

[2] "They think words virtue, as they think timber a sacred grove." —Horace, *Ep.*, i. 6, 31.

[3] "Which they ought to reverence, though they cannot comprehend."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 2.

proposed, another moving cause. Now virtue owns nothing to be hers, but what is done by herself and for herself alone.

In that great battle of Platæa, that the Greeks under the command of Pausanias gained against Mardonius and the Persians, the conquerors, according to their custom, coming to divide amongst them the glory of the exploit, attributed to the Spartan nation the pre-eminence of valour in the engagement. The Spartans, great judges of virtue, when they came to determine to what particular man of their nation the honour was due of having the best behaved himself upon this occasion, found that Aristodemus had of all others hazarded his person with the greatest bravery; but did not, however, allow him any prize, by reason that his virtue had been incited by a desire to clear his reputation from the reproach of his miscarriage at the business of Thermopylæ, and to die bravely to wipe off that former blemish.

Our judgments are yet sick, and obey the humour of our depraved manners. I observe most of the wits of these times pretend to ingenuity, by endeavouring to blemish and darken the glory of the bravest and most generous actions of former ages, putting one vile interpretation or another upon them, and forging and supposing vain causes and motives for the noble things they did: a mighty subtlety indeed! Give me the greatest and most unblemished action that ever the day beheld, and I will contrive a hundred plausible drifts and ends to obscure it. God knows, whoever will stretch them out to the full, what diversity of images our internal wills suffer under. They do not so maliciously play the censurers, as they do it ignorantly and rudely in all their detractions.

The same pains and licence that others take to blemish and bespatter these illustrious names, I would willingly undergo to lend them a shoulder to raise them higher. These rare forms, that are culled out by the consent of the wisest men of all ages, for the world's example, I should not stick to augment in honour, as far as my invention would permit, in all the circumstances of favourable interpretation; and we may well believe that the force of our invention is infinitely short of their merit. 'Tis the duty of good men to portray virtue as beautiful as they can, and there would be nothing wrong should our passion a little transport us in favour of so sacred a form. What these people do, on the contrary, they either do out of malice, or by the vice of confining their belief to their own capacity; or, which I am more inclined to think, for not having their sight strong, clear, and elevated enough to conceive the splendour of virtue in her native purity: as Plutarch complains, that in his time some attributed the cause of the younger Cato's death to his fear of Cæsar, at which he seems very angry, and with good reason; and by this a man may guess how much more he would have been offended with those who have attributed it to ambition. Senseless people! He would rather have performed a noble, just, and generous action, and to have had ignominy for his reward, than for glory. That man was in truth a pattern that nature chose out to show to what height human virtue and constancy could arrive.

But I am not capable of handling so rich an argument, and shall therefore only set five Latin poets together, contending in the praise of Cato; and, incidentally, for their own too. Now, a well-educated child will judge the two first, in com-

parison of the others, a little flat and languid; the third more vigorous, but overthrown by the extravagance of his own force; he will then think that there will be room for one or two gradations of invention to come to the fourth, and, mounting to the pitch of that, he will lift up his hands in admiration; coming to the last, the first by some space[1] (but a space that he will swear is not to be filled up by any human wit), he will be astounded, he will not know where he is.

And here is a wonder: we have far more poets than judges and interpreters of poetry; it is easier to write it than to understand it. There is, indeed, a certain low and moderate sort of poetry, that a man may well enough judge by certain rules of art; but the true, supreme, and divine poesy is above all rules and reason. And whoever discerns the beauty of it with the most assured and most steady sight, sees no more than the quick reflection of a flash of lightning: it does not exercise, but ravishes and overwhelms our judgment. The fury that possesses him who is able to penetrate into it wounds yet a third man by hearing him repeat it; like a loadstone that not only attracts the needle, but also infuses into it the virtue to attract others. And it is more evidently manifest in our theatres, that the sacred inspiration of the Muses, having first stirred up the poet to anger, sorrow, hatred, and out of himself, to whatever they will, does moreover by the poet possess the actor, and by the actor consecutively all the spectators. So much do our passions hang and depend upon one another.[2]

Poetry has ever had that power over me from a child to transpierce and transport me; but this

[1] The *longum intervallum* of Virgil.
[2] All these images are taken from Plato's *Ion*.

vivid sentiment that is natural to me has been variously handled by variety of forms, not so much higher or lower (for they were ever the highest of every kind), as differing in colour. First, a gay and sprightly fluency; afterwards, a lofty and penetrating subtlety; and lastly, a mature and constant vigour. Their names will better express them: Ovid, Lucan, Virgil.

But our folks are beginning their career:—

"Sit Cato, dum vivit, sane vel Cæsare major,"[1]

says one:—

"Et invictum, devictâ morte, Catonem,"[2]

says the second. And the third, speaking of the civil wars betwixt Cæsar and Pompey:—

"Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni."[3]

And the fourth, upon the praises of Cæsar:—

"Et cuncta terrarum subacta,
Præter atrocem animum Catonis."[4]

And the master of the choir, after having set forth all the great names of the greatest Romans, ends thus:—

"His dantem jura Catonem."[5]

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[1] "Let Cato, whilst he live, be greater than Cæsar."—Martial, vi. 32.

[2] "And Cato invincible, death being overcome."—Manilius, *Astron.*, iv. 87.

[3] "The victorious cause blessed the gods, the defeated one Cato."—Lucan, i. 128.

[4] "And conquered all but the indomitable mind of Cato."—Horace, *Od.*, ii. 1, 23.

[5] "Cato giving laws to all the rest."—*Æneid*, viii. 670.

CHAPTER XXXVII

HOW WE CRY AND LAUGH FOR THE SAME THING

WHEN we read in history that Antigonus was very much displeased with his son for presenting him the head of King Pyrrhus his enemy, but newly slain fighting against him, and that seeing it, he wept[1]; and that René, Duke of Lorraine, also lamented the death of Charles, Duke of Burgundy, whom he had himself defeated,[2] and appeared in mourning at his funeral; and that in the battle of D'Auray (which Count Montfort obtained over Charles de Blois, his competitor for the duchy of Brittany),[3] the conqueror meeting the dead body of his enemy, was very much afflicted at his death, we must not presently cry out:—

> "E cosi avven, che l'animo ciascuna
> Sua passion sotto 'l contrario manto,
> Ricopre, con la vista or' chiara, or' bruna."[4]

When Pompey's head was presented to Cæsar, the histories tell us[5] that he turned away his face, as from a sad and unpleasing object. There had been so long an intelligence and society betwixt them in the management of the public affairs, so great a community of fortunes, so many mutual offices, and so near an alliance, that this countenance of his ought not to suffer under any misinterpretation, or to be suspected for either

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus.*
[2] Before Nancy, in 1477.
[3] September 29, 1364.
[4] "And thus it happens that the mind of each veils its passion under a different appearance, sad beneath a smiling visage, gay beneath a sombre air."—*Petrarch.*
[5] Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 13.

false or counterfeit, as this other seems to believe :—

> "Tutumque putavit
> Jam bonus esse socer ; lacrymas non sponte cadentes,
> Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto" [1] ;

for though it be true that the greatest part of our actions are no other than visor and disguise, and that it may sometimes be true that—

> "Hæredis fletus sub personâ risus est," [2]

yet, in judging of these accidents, we are to consider how much our souls are oftentimes agitated with divers passions. And as they say that in our bodies there is a congregation of divers humours, of which that is the sovereign which, according to the complexion we are of, is commonly most predominant in us : so, though the soul have in it divers motions to give it agitation, yet must there of necessity be one to overrule all the rest, though not with so necessary and absolute a dominion but that through the flexibility and inconstancy of the soul, those of less authority may upon occasion reassume their place and make a little sally in turn. Thence it is, that we see not only children, who innocently obey and follow nature, often laugh and cry at the same thing, but not one of us can boast, what journey soever he may have in hand that he has the most set his heart upon, but when he comes to part with his family and friends, he will find something that troubles him within ; and though he refrain his tears yet he puts foot in the

[1] "And now he thought it safe to play the kind father-in-law, shedding forced tears, and from a joyful breast discharging sighs and groans."—Lucan, ix. 1037.

[2] "The heir's tears behind the mask are smiles."—Publius Syrus, *apud* Gellium, xvii. 14.

stirrup with a sad and cloudy countenance. And what gentle flame soever may warm the heart of modest and well-born virgins, yet are they fain to be forced from about their mothers' necks to be put to bed to their husbands, whatever this boon companion is pleased to say:—

> "Estne novis nuptis odio Venus? an-ne parentum
> Frustrantur falsis gaudia lachrymulis,
> Ubertim thalami quasi intra limina fundunt?
> Non, ita me divi, vera gemunt, juverint."[1]

Neither is it strange to lament a person dead whom a man would by no means should be alive. When I rattle my man, I do it with all the mettle I have, and load him with no feigned, but downright real curses; but the heat being over, if he should stand in need of me, I should be very ready to do him good: for I instantly turn the leaf. When I call him calf and coxcomb, I do not pretend to entail those titles upon him for ever; neither do I think I give myself the lie in calling him an honest fellow presently after. No one quality engrosses us purely and universally. Were it not the sign of a fool to talk to one's self, there would hardly be a day or hour wherein I might not be heard to grumble and mutter to myself and against myself, "Confound the fool!"[2] and yet I do not think that to be my definition. Who for seeing me one while cold and presently very fond towards my wife, believes the one or the other to be counterfeited, is an ass. Nero, taking leave of his mother whom he was sending to be drowned, was nevertheless sensible of some emotion at this farewell, and was

[1] "Is Venus really so repugnant to newly-married maids? Do they meet the smiles of parents with feigned tears? They weep copiously within the very threshold of the nuptial chamber. No, so the gods help me, they do not truly grieve."—Catullus, lxvi. 15.

[2] "Bren du fat."—*French orig.*

struck with horror and pity. 'Tis said, that the light of the sun is not one continuous thing, but that he darts new rays so thick one upon another that we cannot perceive the intermission :—

> "Largus enim liquidi fons luminis, ætherius sol,
> Irrigat assidue cœlum candore recenti,
> Suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen."[1]

Just so the soul variously and imperceptibly darts out her passions.

Artabanus coming by surprise once upon his nephew Xerxes, chid him for the sudden alteration of his countenance. He was considering the immeasurable greatness of his forces passing over the Hellespont for the Grecian expedition : he was first seized with a palpitation of joy, to see so many millions of men under his command, and this appeared in the gaiety of his looks : but his thoughts at the same instant suggesting to him that of so many lives, within a century at most, there would not be one left, he presently knit his brows and grew sad, even to tears.

We have resolutely pursued the revenge of an injury received, and been sensible of a singular contentment for the victory ; but we shall weep notwithstanding. 'Tis not for the victory, though, that we shall weep : there is nothing altered in that : but the soul looks upon things with another eye and represents them to itself with another kind of face ; for everything has many faces and several aspects.

Relations, old acquaintances, and friendships, possess our imaginations and make them tender

[1] "So the wide fountain of liquid light, the ethereal sun, steadily fertilises the heavens with new heat, and supplies a continuous store of fresh light."—Lucretius, v. 282.

for the time, according to their condition; but the turn is so quick, that 'tis gone in a moment:—

> "Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,
> Quam si mens fieri proponit, et inchoat ipsa,
> Ocius ergo animus, quam res se perciet ulla,
> Ante oculos quorum in promptu natura videtur"[1];

and therefore, if we would make one continued thing of all this succession of passions, we deceive ourselves. When Timoleon laments the murder he had committed upon so mature and generous deliberation, he does not lament the liberty restored to his country, he does not lament the tyrant; but he laments his brother: one part of his duty is performed; let us give him leave to perform the other.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

OF SOLITUDE

LET us pretermit that long comparison betwixt the active and the solitary life; and as for the fine sayings with which ambition and avarice palliate their vices, that we are not born for ourselves but for the public,[2] let us boldly appeal to those who are in public affairs; let them lay their hands upon their hearts, and then say whether, on the contrary, they do not rather aspire to titles and offices and that tumult of the world to make their private advantage at the public expense. The corrupt

[1] "Nothing therefore seems to be done in so swift a manner than if the mind proposes it to be done, and itself begins. It is more active than anything which we see in nature."—Lucretius, iii. 183.

[2] This is the eulogium passed by Lucan on Cato of Utica, ii. 383.

ways by which in this our time they arrive at the height to which their ambitions aspire, manifestly enough declares that their ends cannot be very good. Let us tell ambition that it is she herself who gives us a taste of solitude; for what does she so much avoid as society? What does she so much seek as elbow-room? A man may do well or ill everywhere; but if what Bias says be true,[1] that the greatest part is the worse part, or what the Preacher says: there is not one good of a thousand:—

> "Rari quippe boni: numero vix sunt totidem quot Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili,"[2]

the contagion is very dangerous in the crowd. A man must either imitate the vicious or hate them: both are dangerous things, either to resemble them because they are many or to hate many because they are unresembling to ourselves.[3] Merchants who go to sea are in the right when they are cautious that those who embark with them in the same bottom be neither dissolute blasphemers nor vicious other ways, looking upon such society as unfortunate. And therefore it was that Bias pleasantly said to some, who being with him in a dangerous storm implored the assistance of the gods: "Peace, speak softly," said he, "that they may not know you are here in my company."[4] And of more pressing example, Albuquerque, viceroy in the Indies for Emmanuel, king of Portugal, in an extreme peril of shipwreck, took

[1] Diogenes Laertius, in *Vitâ*.

[2] "Good men forsooth are scarce: there are hardly as many as there are gates of Thebes or mouths of the rich Nile."—Juvenal, *Sat.*, xiii. 26.

[3] Seneca, *Ep.*, 7.

[4] Diogenes Laertius, in *Vitâ*.

a young boy upon his shoulders, for this only end that, in the society of their common danger his innocence might serve to protect him, and to recommend him to the divine favour, that they might get safe to shore. 'Tis not that a wise man may not live everywhere content, and be alone in the very crowd of a palace; but if it be left to his own choice, the schoolman will tell you that he should fly the very sight of the crowd: he will endure it if need be; but if it be referred to him, he will choose to be alone. He cannot think himself sufficiently rid of vice, if he must yet contend with it in other men. Charondas punished those as evil men who were convicted of keeping ill company.[1] There is nothing so unsociable and sociable as man, the one by his vice, the other by his nature. And Antisthenes, in my opinion, did not give him a satisfactory answer, who reproached him with frequenting ill company, by saying that the physicians lived well enough amongst the sick[2]: for if they contribute to the health of the sick, no doubt but by the contagion, continual sight of, and familiarity with diseases, they must of necessity impair their own.

Now the end, I take it, is all one, to live at more leisure and at one's ease: but men do not always take the right way. They often think they have totally taken leave of all business, when they have only exchanged one employment for another: there is little less trouble in governing a private family than a whole kingdom. Wherever the mind is perplexed, it is in an entire disorder, and domestic employments are not less troublesome for being less important. Moreover, for having shaken off

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xii. 4.
[2] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Antisthenes.*

the court and the exchange, we have not taken leave of the principal vexations of life:—

"Ratio et prudentia curas,
Non locus effusi late maris arbiter, aufert"[1];

ambition, avarice, irresolution, fear, and inordinate desires, do not leave us because we forsake our native country:—

"Et
Post equitem sedet atra cura"[2];

they often follow us even to cloisters and philosophical schools; nor deserts, nor caves, hair-shirts, nor fasts, can disengage us from them:—

"Hæret lateri lethalis arundo."[3]

One telling Socrates that such a one was nothing improved by his travels: "I very well believe it," said he, "for he took himself along with him"[4]:—

"Quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus? patriæ quis exsul
Se quoque fugit?"[5]

If a man do not first discharge both himself and his mind of the burden with which he finds himself oppressed, motion will but make it press the harder and sit the heavier, as the lading of a ship is of less encumbrance when fast and bestowed in a settled posture. You do a sick man more harm than good in removing him from place to place; you fix and establish the disease by motion, as

[1] "Reason and prudence, not a place with a commanding view of the great ocean, banish care."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 2.
[2] "Black care sits behind the horseman."—Horace, *Od.*, iii. 1, 40.
[3] "The fatal shaft adheres to the side."—*Æneid*, iv. 73.
[4] Seneca, *Ep.*, 104.
[5] "Why do we seek climates warmed by another sun? Who, an exile from his country, also flees from himself?"—Horace, *Od.*, ii. 16, 18.

stakes sink deeper and more firmly into the earth by being moved up and down in the place where they are designed to stand. Therefore, it is not enough to get remote from the public; 'tis not enough to shift the soil only; a man must flee from the popular conditions that have taken possession of his soul, he must sequester and come again to himself:—

> "Rupi jam vincula, dicas:
> Nam luctata canis nodum arripit; attamen illi,
> Quum fugit, a collo trahitur pars longa catenæ."[1]

We still carry our fetters along with us. 'Tis not an absolute liberty; we yet cast back a look upon what we have left behind us; the fancy is still full of it:—

> "Nisi purgatum est pectus, quæ prælia nobis
> Atque pericula tunc ingratis insinuandum?
> Quantæ tum scindunt hominem cupedinis acres
> Sollicitum curæ? quantique perinde timores?
> Quidve superbia, spurcitia, ac petulantia, quantas
> Efficiunt clades? quid luxus desidiesque?"[2]

Our disease lies in the mind, which cannot escape from itself;

> "In culpâ est animus, qui se non effugit unquam,"[3]

and therefore is to be called home and confined within itself: that is the true solitude, and that may be enjoyed even in populous cities and the courts of kings, though more commodiously apart.

[1] "You say, perhaps, you have broken your chains: the dog who after long efforts has broken his cord, still in his flight drags a heavy portion of it after him."—Persius, *Sat.*, v. 128.

[2] "But unless the mind is purified, what internal combats and dangers must we incur in spite of all our efforts! How many bitter anxieties, how many terrors, follow upon unregulated passion! What destruction befalls us from pride, lust, petulant anger! What evils arise from luxury and sloth!"—Lucretius, v. 43.

[3] Horace, *Ep.*, i. 14, 13. The citation is translated in the preceding passage.

Now, since we will attempt to live alone, and to waive all manner of conversation amongst them, let us so order it that our content may depend wholly upon ourselves; let us dissolve all obligations that ally us to others; let us obtain this from ourselves, that we may live alone in good earnest, and live at our ease too.

Stilpo having escaped from the burning of his town, where he lost wife, children, and goods, Demetrius Poliorcetes seeing him, in so great a ruin of his country, appear with an undisturbed countenance, asked him if he had received no loss! To which he made answer, No; and that, thank God, nothing was lost of his.[1] This also was the meaning of the philosopher Antisthenes, when he pleasantly said, that "men should furnish themselves with such things as would float, and might with the owner escape the storm"[2]; and certainly a wise man never loses anything if he have himself. When the city of Nola was ruined by the barbarians, Paulinus, who was bishop of that place, having there lost all he had, himself a prisoner, prayed after this manner: "O Lord, defend me from being sensible of this loss; for Thou knowest they have yet touched nothing of that which is mine."[3] The riches that made him rich and the goods that made him good, were still kept entire. This it is to make choice of treasures that can secure themselves from plunder and violence, and to hide them in such a place into which no one can enter and that is not to be betrayed by any but ourselves. Wives, children, and goods must be had, and especially health, by him that can get it; but we are not so to set our hearts upon them that our happiness must have its

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 7. [2] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 6.
[3] St. Augustin, *De Civit. Dei*, i. 10.

dependence upon them; we must reserve a back-shop, wholly our own and entirely free, wherein to settle our true liberty, our principal solitude and retreat. And in this we must for the most part entertain ourselves with ourselves, and so privately that no exotic knowledge or communication be admitted there; there to laugh and to talk, as if without wife, children, goods, train, or attendance, to the end that when it shall so fall out that we must lose any or all of these, it may be no new thing to be without them. We have a mind pliable in itself, that will be company; that has where-withal to attack and to defend, to receive and to give: let us not then fear in this solitude to languish under an uncomfortable vacuity:—

"In solis sis tibi turba locis."[1]

Virtue is satisfied with herself, without discipline, without words, without effects. In our ordinary actions there is not one of a thousand that concerns ourselves. He that thou seest scrambling up the ruins of that wall, furious and transported, against whom so many harquebuss-shots are levelled; and that other all over scars, pale, and fainting with hunger, and yet resolved rather to die than to open the gates to him; dost thou think that these men are there upon their own account? No; peradventure in the behalf of one whom they never saw and who never concerns himself for their pains and danger, but lies wallowing the while in sloth and pleasure: this other slavering, blear-eyed, slovenly fellow, that thou seest come out of his study after midnight, dost thou think he has been tumbling over books to learn how to become a better man, wiser, and more content? No such

[1] "In solitude, be a multitude to thyself."—Tibullus, vi. 13. 12.

matter; he will there end his days, but he will teach posterity the measure of Plautus' verses and the true orthography of a Latin word. Who is it that does not voluntarily exchange his health, his repose, and his very life for reputation and glory, the most useless, frivolous, and false coin that passes current amongst us? Our own death does not sufficiently terrify and trouble us; let us, moreover, charge ourselves with those of our wives, children, and family: our own affairs do not afford us anxiety enough; let us undertake those of our neighbours and friends, still more to break our brains and torment us:—

> "Vah! quemquamne hominem in animum instituere, aut Parare, quod sit carius, quam ipse est sibi?"[1]

Solitude seems to me to wear the best favour in such as have already employed their most active and flourishing age in the world's service, after the example of Thales. We have lived enough for others; let us at least live out the small remnant of life for ourselves; let us now call in our thoughts and intentions to ourselves, and to our own ease and repose. 'Tis no light thing to make a sure retreat; it will be enough for us to do without mixing other enterprises. Since God gives us leisure to order our removal, let us make ready, truss our baggage, take leave betimes of the company, and disentangle ourselves from those violent importunities that engage us elsewhere and separate us from ourselves.

We must break the knot of our obligations, how strong soever, and hereafter love this or that, but espouse nothing but ourselves: that is to say, let

[1] "Ah! can any man conceive in his mind or realise what is dearer than he is to himself?"—Terence, *Adelph.*, i. 1, 13.

the remainder be our own, but not so joined and so close as not to be forced away without flaying us or tearing out part of our whole. The greatest thing in the world is for a man to know that he is his own. 'Tis time to wean ourselves from society when we can no longer add anything to it; he who is not in a condition to lend must forbid himself to borrow. Our forces begin to fail us; let us call them in and concentrate them in and for ourselves. He that can cast off within himself and resolve the offices of friendship and company, let him do it. In this decay of nature which renders him useless, burdensome, and importunate to others, let him take care not to be useless, burdensome, and importunate to himself. Let him soothe and caress himself, and above all things be sure to govern himself with reverence to his reason and conscience to that degree as to be ashamed to make a false step in their presence :—

"Rarum est enim, ut satis se quisque vereatur."[1]

Socrates[2] says that boys are to cause themselves to be instructed, men to exercise themselves in well-doing, and old men to retire from all civil and military employments, living at their own discretion, without the obligation to any office. There are some complexions more proper for these precepts of retirement than others. Such as are of a soft and dull apprehension, and of a tender will and affection, not readily to be subdued or employed, whereof I am one, both by natural condition and by reflection, will sooner incline to this advice than active and busy souls, which embrace all, engage in all, are hot upon everything, which

[1] "For 'tis rare that men have respect and reverence enough for themselves."—Quintilian, x. 7.

[2] Stobæus, *Serm.* xli.

offer, present, and give themselves up to every occasion. We are to use these accidental and extraneous commodities, so far as they are pleasant to us, but by no means to lay our principal foundation there; 'tis no true one; neither nature nor reason allows it so to be. Why therefore should we, contrary to their laws, enslave our own contentment to the power of another? To anticipate also the accidents of fortune, to deprive ourselves of the conveniences we have in our own power, as several have done upon the account of devotion, and some philosophers by reasoning; to be one's own servant, to lie hard, to put out our own eyes, to throw our wealth into the river, to go in search of grief; these, by the misery of this life, aiming at bliss in another; those by laying themselves low to avoid the danger of falling: all such are acts of an excessive virtue. The stoutest and most resolute natures render even their seclusion glorious and exemplary:—

> "Tuta et parvula laudo,
> Quum res deficiunt, satis inter vilia fortis:
> Verum, ubi quid melius contingit et unctius, idem
> Vos sapere et solos aio bene vivere, quorum
> Conspicitur nitidis fundata pecunia villis."[1]

A great deal less would serve my turn well enough. 'Tis enough for me, under fortune's favour, to prepare myself for her disgrace, and, being at my ease, to represent to myself, as far as my imagination can stretch, the ill to come; as we do at jousts and tiltings, where we counterfeit war in the greatest calm of peace. I do not think

[1] "When means are deficient, I laud a safe and humble condition, content with little: but when things grow better and more easy, I all the same say that you alone are wise and live well, whose invested money is visible in beautiful villas."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 15.

Arcesilaus the philosopher the less temperate and virtuous for knowing that he made use of gold and silver vessels, when the condition of his fortune allowed him so to do[1]; I have indeed a better opinion of him than if he had denied himself what he used with liberality and moderation. I see the utmost limits of natural necessity: and considering a poor man begging at my door, oft-times more jocund and more healthy than I myself am, I put myself into his place, and attempt to dress my mind after his mode; and running, in like manner, over other examples, though I fancy death, poverty, contempt, and sickness treading on my heels, I easily resolve not to be affrighted, forasmuch as a less than I takes them with so much patience; and am not willing to believe that a less understanding can do more than a greater, or that the effects of precept cannot arrive to as great a height as those of custom. And knowing of how uncertain duration these accidental conveniences are, I never forget, in the height of all my enjoyments, to make it my chiefest prayer to Almighty God, that He will please to render me content with myself and the condition wherein I am. I see young men very gay and frolic, who nevertheless keep a mass of pills in their trunk at home, to take when they've got a cold, which they fear so much the less, because they think they have remedy at hand. Every one should do in like manner, and, moreover, if they find themselves subject to some more violent disease, should furnish themselves with such medicines as may numb and stupefy the part.

The employment a man should choose for such a life ought neither to be a laborious nor an unpleasing

[1] Diogenes Laertius, iv. 38.

one; otherwise 'tis to no purpose at all to be retired. And this depends upon every one's liking and humour. Mine has no manner of complacency for husbandry, and such as love it ought to apply themselves to it with moderation:—

"Et mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor."[1]

Husbandry is otherwise a very servile employment, as Sallust calls it[2]; though some parts of it are more excusable than the rest, as the care of gardens, which Xenophon attributes to Cyrus[3]; and a mean may be found out betwixt the sordid and low application, so full of perpetual solicitude, which is seen in men who make it their entire business and study, and the stupid and extreme negligence, letting all things go at random which we see in others:

"Miramur, si Democriti pecus edit agellos
Cultaque, dum pĕrĕgre est animus sine corpore velox."[4]

But let us hear what advice the younger Pliny[5] gives his friend Caninius Rufus upon the subject of solitude: "I advise thee, in the full and plentiful retirement wherein thou art, to leave to thy hinds the care of thy husbandry, and to addict thyself to the study of letters, to extract from thence something that may be entirely and absolutely thine own." By which he means reputation; like Cicero, who says that he would employ his solitude and retirement from public affairs to acquire by his writings an immortal life.[6]

[1] "And I endeavour to make circumstances subject to me, and not me subject to circumstances."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 1, 19.
[2] *Catiline*, c. 4. [3] *Economics*, iv. 20.
[4] "Democritus' cattle eat his corn and spoil his fields, whilst his soaring mind ranges abroad without the body."—Horace, *Ep.*, i, 12, 12.
[5] *Ep.*, i. 3. [6] Cicero, *Orator.*, c. 43.

"Usque adeo-ne
Scire tuum, nihil est, nisi te scire hoc, sciat alter?"[1]

It appears to be reason, when a man talks of retiring from the world, that he should look quite out of himself. These do it but by halves: they design well enough for themselves when they shall be no more in it; but still they pretend to extract the fruits of that design from the world, when absent from it, by a ridiculous contradiction.

The imagination of those who seek solitude upon the account of devotion, filling their hopes and courage with certainty of divine promises in the other life, is much more rationally founded. They propose to themselves God, an infinite object in goodness and power; the soul has there wherewithal, at full liberty, to satiate her desires: afflictions and sufferings turn to their advantage, being undergone for the acquisition of eternal health and joy; death is to be wished and longed for, where it is the passage to so perfect a condition; the asperity of the rules they impose upon themselves is immediately softened by custom, and all their carnal appetites baffled and subdued, by refusing to humour and feed them, these being only supported by use and exercise. This sole end of another happily immortal life is that which really merits that we should abandon the pleasures and conveniences of this; and he who can really and constantly inflame his soul with the ardour of this vivid faith and hope, erects for himself in solitude a more voluptuous and delicious life than any other sort of existence.

Neither the end, then, nor the means of this

[1] "Is all that thou hast learned so far nothing, unless another knows that thou knowest?"—Persius, *Sat.*, i. 23.

advice[1] pleases me; we always relapse ill from fever into fever. This[2] book-employment is as painful as any other, and as great an enemy to health, which ought to be the first thing considered; neither ought a man to be allured with the pleasure of it, which is the same that destroys the frugal, the avaricious, the voluptuous, and the ambitious man. The sages give us caution enough to beware the treachery of our desires, and to distinguish true and entire pleasures from such as are mixed and complicated with greater pain. For the most of our pleasures, say they, wheedle and caress only to strangle us, like those thieves the Egyptians called Philistæ; if the headache should come before drunkenness, we should have a care of drinking too much; but pleasure, to deceive us, marches before and conceals her train. Books are pleasant, but if, by being over-studious, we impair our health and spoil our good-humour, the best pieces we have, let us give it over; I, for my part, am one of those who think, that no fruit derived from them can recompense so great a loss. As men who have long felt themselves weakened by indisposition, give themselves up at last to the mercy of medicine and submit to certain rules of living, which they are for the future never to transgress; so he who retires, weary of and disgusted with the common way of living, ought to model this new one he enters into by the rules of reason, and to institute and establish it by premeditation and reflection. He ought to have taken leave of all sorts of

[1] Of Pliny to Rufus. The French just below is: "Nous retombons tousiours de fieure en chaud mal."

[2] "This plodding occupation of bookes is as painfull as any other, and as great an enemie vnto health, which ought principally to be considered. And a man should not suffer him selfe to be inveagled by the pleasure he takes in them."—Florio, edit. 1613, p. 122.

labour, what advantage soever it may promise, and generally to have shaken off all those passions which disturb the tranquillity of body and soul, and then choose the way that best suits with his own humour:

"Unusquisque suâ noverit ire viâ."[1]

In husbandry, study, hunting, and all other exercises, men are to proceed to the utmost limits of pleasure, but must take heed of engaging further, where trouble begins to mix with it. We are to reserve so much employment only as is necessary to keep us in breath and to defend us from the inconveniences that the other extreme of a dull and stupid laziness brings along with it. There are sterile knotty sciences, chiefly hammered out for the crowd; let such be left to them who are engaged in the world's service. I for my part care for no other books, but either such as are pleasant and easy, to amuse me, or those that comfort and instruct me how to regulate my life and death:—

"Tacitum sylvas inter reptare salubres,
Curantem, quidquid dignum sapienti bonoque est."[2]

Wiser men, having great force and vigour of soul, may propose to themselves a rest wholly spiritual: but for me, who have a very ordinary soul, it is very necessary to support myself with bodily conveniences; and age having of late deprived me of those pleasures that were more acceptable to me, I instruct and whet my appetite to those that remain, more suitable to this other reason. We ought to

[1] Propertius, lib. ii. 25, 38. Montaigne translates the passage in the preceding paragraph.

[2] "Silently meditating in the healthy groves, whatever is worthy of a wise and good man."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 4, 4.

hold with all our force, both of hands and teeth, the use of the pleasures of life that our years, one after another, snatch away from us :—

"Carpamus dulcia ; nostrum est,
Quod vivis ; cinis, et manes, et fabula fies."[1]

Now, as to the end that Pliny and Cicero propose to us of glory, 'tis infinitely wide of my account. Ambition is of all others the most contrary humour to solitude ; glory and repose are things that cannot possibly inhabit in one and the same place. For so much as I understand, these have only their arms and legs disengaged from the crowd ; their soul and intention remain confined behind more than ever :—

"Tun', vetule, auriculis alienis colligis escas?"[2]

they have only retired to take a better leap, and by a stronger motion to give a brisker charge into the crowd. Will you see how they shoot short? Let us put into the counterpoise the advice of two philosophers,[3] of two very different sects, writing, the one to Idomeneus, the other to Lucilius, their friends, to retire into solitude from worldly honours and affairs. "You have," say they, "hitherto lived swimming and floating ; come now and die in the harbour : you have given the first part of your life to the light, give what remains to the shade. It is impossible to give over business, if you do not also quit the fruit ; therefore disengage yourselves

[1] "Let us snatch the sweets ; it is for us, as long as thou livest : thou wilt become ashes, and a spirit and a myth."—Persius, *Sat.*, v. 151. The poet seems to pass rather abruptly from the plural *nostrum* to the second person singular.

[2] "Dost thou, then, old man, collect food for others' ears?"—Persius, *Sat.*, i. 22.

[3] Epicurus and Seneca. See Seneca, *Ep.*, 21, who cites a passage from the Letter of Epicurus to Idomeneus, differing from that given by Diogenes Laertius.

from all concern of name and glory; 'tis to be feared the lustre of your former actions will give you but too much light, and follow you into your most private retreat. Quit with other pleasures that which proceeds from the approbation of another man: and as to your knowledge and parts, never concern yourselves; they will not lose their effect if yourselves be the better for them. Remember him, who being asked why he took so much pains in an art that could come to the knowledge of but few persons? 'A few are enough for me,' replied he; 'I have enough with one; I have enough with never an one.'[1] He said true; you and a companion are theatre enough to one another, or you to yourself. Let the people be to you one, and be you one to the whole people.[2] 'Tis an unworthy ambition to think to derive glory from a man's sloth and privacy: you are to do like the beasts of chase, who efface the track at the entrance into their den.[3] You are no more to concern yourself how the world talks of you, but how you are to talk to yourself. Retire yourself into yourself, but first prepare yourself there to receive yourself: it were a folly to trust yourself in your own hands, if you cannot govern yourself.[4] A man may miscarry alone as well as in company. Till you have rendered yourself one before whom you dare not trip, and till you have a bashfulness and respect for yourself:—

'Obversentur species honestæ animo'[5];

present continually to your imagination Cato,

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 7.
[2] Idem, *Ep.*, 7, ascribes these words to Democritus.
[3] Idem, *Ep.*, 68.
[4] Idem, *Ep.*, 25.
[5] "Let honest things be ever present to the mind."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 22.

Phocion, and Aristides, in whose presence the fools themselves will hide their faults, and make them controllers of all your intentions; should these deviate from virtue, your respect to those will set you right; they will keep you in this way to be contented with yourself; to borrow nothing of any other but yourself; to stay and fix your soul in certain and limited thoughts, wherein she may please herself, and having understood the true and real goods, which men the more enjoy the more they understand, to rest satisfied, without desire of prolongation of life or name." This is the precept of the true and natural philosophy, not of a boasting and prating philosophy, such as that of the two former.[1]

CHAPTER XXXIX

A CONSIDERATION UPON CICERO

One word more by way of comparison betwixt these two. There are to be gathered out of the writings of Cicero and the younger Pliny (but little, in my opinion, resembling his uncle in his humours) infinite testimonies of a beyond measure ambitious nature; and amongst others, this for one, that they both, in the sight of all the world, solicit the historians of their time not to forget them in their memoirs; and fortune, as if in spite, has made the vanity of those requests live upon record down to this age of ours, while she has long since consigned the histories themselves to oblivion. But this exceeds all meanness of spirit in persons of such a quality as they were, to think to derive any great renown from babbling and prating; even to the

[1] Pliny the Younger and Cicero.

publishing of their private letters to their friends, and so withal, that though some of them were never sent, the opportunity being lost, they nevertheless presented them to the light, with this worthy excuse that they were unwilling to lose their labours and lucubrations. Was it not very well becoming two consuls of Rome, sovereign magistrates of the republic that commanded the world, to spend their leisure in contriving quaint and elegant missives, thence to gain the reputation of being versed in their own mother-tongues?[1] What could a pitiful schoolmaster have done worse, whose trade it was thereby to get his living? If the acts of Xenophon and Cæsar had not far transcended their eloquence, I scarce believe they would ever have taken the pains to have written them; they made it their business to recommend not their speaking, but their doing. And could the perfection of eloquence have added a lustre suitable to a great personage, certainly Scipio and Lælius had never resigned the honour of their comedies, with all the luxuriances and elegances of the Latin tongue, to an African slave; for that the work was theirs, its beauty and excellence sufficiently declare; Terence himself confesses as much, and I should take it ill from any one that would dispossess me of that belief.

'Tis a kind of mockery and offence to extol a

[1] "Cicero writing to Lucceius, *Ep.*, 12, lib. v., and Pliny to Tacitus, *Ep.*, 33, lib. vii., with this most remarkable difference, that the first earnestly desired his friend not to attach himself scrupulously to the rules of, but boldly to leap the barriers of, truth in his favour. 'Te planè etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornes ea vehementius etiam quam fortasse sentis, et in ea leges historiæ negligas'; whereas Pliny declares expressly that he does not desire Tacitus to give the least offence to the truth, 'Quanquam non exigo ut excedas rei actæ modum. Nam nec historiâ debet egredi veritatem, et honesté factis veritas sufficit.' One would have thought that Montaigne should, in justice to Pliny, have distinguished him from Cicero in this particular."—Coste.

man for qualities misbecoming his condition, though otherwise commendable in themselves, but such as ought not, however, to be his chief talent; as if a man should commend a king for being a good painter, a good architect, a good marksman, or a good runner at the ring: commendations that add no honour, unless mentioned altogether and in the train of those that are properly applicable to him, namely, justice and the science of governing and conducting his people both in peace and war. At this rate, agriculture was an honour to Cyrus, and eloquence and the knowledge of letters to Charlemagne. I have in my time known some, who by writing acquired both their titles and fortune, disown their apprenticeship, corrupt their style, and affect ignorance in so vulgar a quality (which also our nation holds to be rarely seen in very learned hands), and to seek a reputation by better qualities. Demosthenes' companions in the embassy to Philip, extolling that prince as handsome, eloquent, and a stout drinker, Demosthenes said that those were commendations more proper for a woman, an advocate, or a sponge, than for a king[1]:—

> "Imperet bellante prior, jacentem
> Lenis in hostem."[2]

'Tis not his profession to know either how to hunt or to dance well:—

> "Orabunt causas alii, cœlique meatus
> Describent radio, et fulgentia sidera dicent;
> Hic regere imperio populos sciat."[3]

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[1] Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes*, c. 4.

[2] "In the fight, overthrow your enemy, but be merciful to him when fallen."—Horace, *Carm. Sæc.*, v. 51.

[3] "Others shall plead at the bar, and describe the spheres, and point out the glittering stars; let this man learn to rule the nations."—*Æneid*, vi. 849.

Plutarch says, moreover, that to appear so excellent in these less necessary qualities is to produce witness against a man's self, that he has spent his time and applied his study ill, which ought to have been employed in the acquisition of more necessary and more useful things. So that Philip, king of Macedon, having heard that great Alexander his son sing once at a feast to the wonder of the best musicians there: "Art thou not ashamed," said he to him, "to sing so well?"[1] And to the same Philip a musician, with whom he was disputing about some things concerning his art: "Heaven forbid, sir," said he, "that so great a misfortune should ever befall you as to understand these things better than I." A king should be able to answer as Iphicrates did the orator, who pressed upon him in his invective after this manner: "And what art thou that thou bravest it at this rate? art thou a man at arms, art thou an archer, art thou a pike-man?" "I am none of all this; but I know how to command all these." And Antisthenes took it for an argument of little value in Ismenias that he was commended for playing excellently well upon a flute.

I know very well, that when I hear any one dwell upon the language of my essays, I had rather a great deal he would say nothing: 'tis not so much to elevate the style as to depress the sense, and so much the more offensively as they do it obliquely; and yet I am much deceived if many other writers deliver more worth noting as to the matter, and, how well or ill soever, if any other writer has sown things much more material, or at all events more downright, upon his paper than myself. To bring the more in, I only muster up the heads; should I

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*, c. i.

annex the sequel, I should trebly multiply the volume. And how many stories have I scattered up and down in this book that I only touch upon, which, should any one more curiously search into, they would find matter enough to produce infinite essays. Neither those stories nor my quotations always serve simply for example, authority, or ornament; I do not only regard them for the use I make of them: they carry sometimes besides what I apply them to, the seed of a more rich and a bolder matter, and sometimes, collaterally, a more delicate sound both to myself who will say no more about it in this place, and to others who shall be of my humour.

But returning to the speaking virtue: I find no great choice betwixt not knowing to speak anything but ill, and not knowing to speak anything but well:—

"Non est ornamentum virile concinnitas."[1]

The sages tell us that, as to what concerns knowledge, 'tis nothing but philosophy; and as to what concerns effects, nothing but virtue, which is generally proper to all degrees and to all orders.

There is something like this in these two other philosophers,[2] for they also promise eternity to the letters they write to their friends; but 'tis after another manner, and by accommodating themselves, for a good end, to the vanity of another; for they write to them that if the concern of making themselves known to future ages, and the thirst of glory, do yet detain them in the management of public affairs, and make them fear the solitude and retirement to which they would persuade them, let them

[1] "A carefully arranged dress is no manly ornament."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 115.

[2] Epicurus and Seneca.

never trouble themselves more about it, forasmuch as they shall have credit enough with posterity to ensure them that were there nothing else but the letters thus written to them, those letters will render their names as known and famous as their own public actions could do.[1] And besides this difference, these are not idle and empty letters, that contain nothing but a fine jingle of well-chosen words and delicate couched phrases, but rather replete and abounding with grand discourses of reason, by which a man may render himself not more eloquent, but more wise, and that instruct us not to speak, but to do well. Away with that eloquence that enchants us with itself, and not with actual things! unless you will allow that of Cicero to be of so supreme a perfection as to form a complete body of itself.

I shall farther add one story we read of him to this purpose, wherein his nature will much more manifestly be laid open to us. He was to make an oration in public, and found himself a little straitened for time to make himself ready at his ease; when Eros, one of his slaves, brought him word that the audience was deferred till the next day, at which he was so ravished with joy that he enfranchised him for the good news.[2]

Upon this subject of letters, I will add this more to what has been already said, that it is a kind of writing wherein my friends think I can do something; and I am willing to confess I should rather have chosen to publish my whimsies that way than any other, had I had to whom to write; but I wanted such a settled intercourse, as I once had, to attract me to it, to raise my fancy, and to support me. For to traffic with the wind, as some others have done, and to forge vain names to

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 21.

[2] Plutarch, *Apothegms*, art. *Cicero.*

direct my letters to, in a serious subject, I could never do it but in a dream, being a sworn enemy to all manner of falsification. I should have been more diligent and more confident had I had a judicious and indulgent friend whom to address, than thus to expose myself to the various judgments of a whole people, and I am deceived if I had not succeeded better. I have naturally a humorous and familiar style, but it is a style of my own, not proper for public business, but, like the language I speak, too compact, irregular, abrupt, and singular; and as to letters of ceremony that have no other substance than a fine contexture of courteous words, I am wholly to seek. I have neither faculty nor relish for those tedious tenders of service and affection; I believe little in them from others, and I should not forgive myself should I say to others more than I myself believe. 'Tis, doubtless, very remote from the present practice; for there never was so abject and servile prostitution of offers: life, soul, devotion, adoration, vassal, slave, and I cannot tell what, as now; all which expressions are so commonly and so indifferently posted to and fro by every one and to every one, that when they would profess a greater and more respectful inclination upon more just occasions, they have not wherewithal to express it. I mortally hate all air of flattery, which is the cause that I naturally fall into a shy, rough, and crude way of speaking, that, to such as do not know me, may seem a little to relish of disdain. I honour those most to whom I show the least honour, and where my soul moves with the greatest cheerfulness, I easily forget the ceremonies of look and gesture, and offer myself faintly and bluntly to them to whom I am the most devoted: methinks they should read it in my heart,

and that the expression of my words does but injure the love I have conceived within. To welcome, take leave, give thanks, accost, offer my service, and such verbal formalities as the ceremonious laws of our modern civility enjoin, I know no man so stupidly unprovided of language as myself; and I have never been employed in writing letters of favour and recommendation, that he, in whose behalf it was written, did not think my mediation cold and imperfect. The Italians are great printers of letters; I do believe I have at least an hundred several volumes of them; of all which those of Annibale Caro seem to me to be the best. If all the paper I have scribbled to the ladies at the time when my hand was really prompted by my passion, were now in being, there might, peradventure, be found a page worthy to be communicated to our young inamoratas, that are besotted with that fury. I always write my letters post-haste—so precipitately, that though I write intolerably ill, I rather choose to do it myself, than to employ another; for I can find none able to follow me: and I never transcribe any. I have accustomed the great ones who know me to endure my blots and dashes, and upon paper without fold or margin. Those that cost me the most pains, are the worst; when I once begin to draw it in by head and shoulders, 'tis a sign that I am not there. I fall too without premeditation or design; the first word begets the second, and so to the end of the chapter. The letters of this age consist more in fine edges and prefaces than in matter. Just as I had rather write two letters than close and fold up one,[1] and always assign that employment

[1] How this tallies with the confession of Charles Lamb, that he was as incapable of folding up a letter as a Hottentot!

to some other, so, when the real business of my letter is dispatched, I would with all my heart transfer it to another hand to add those long harangues, offers, and prayers, that we place at the bottom, and should be glad that some new custom would discharge us of that trouble; as also of superscribing them with a long legend of qualities and titles, which for fear of mistakes, I have often not written at all, and especially to men of the long robe and finance; there are so many new offices, such a dispensation and ordering of titles of honour, that 'tis hard to set them forth aright: yet, being so dearly bought, they are neither to be altered nor forgotten without offence. I find it equally in bad taste to encumber the fronts and inscriptions of the books we commit to the press with such.

CHAPTER XL

THAT THE TASTE FOR GOOD AND EVIL DEPENDS IN GOOD PART UPON THE OPINION WE HAVE OF THEM

Men (says an ancient Greek sentence)[1] are tormented with the opinions they have of things and not by the things themselves. It were a great victory obtained for the relief of our miserable human condition, could this proposition be established for certain and true throughout. For if evils have no admission into us but by the judgment we ourselves make of them, it should seem that it is, then, in our own power to despise them or to turn them to good. If things surrender

[1] *Manual of Epictetus*, c. 10.

themselves to our mercy, why do we not convert and accommodate them to our advantage? If what we call evil and torment is neither evil nor torment of itself, but only that our fancy gives it that quality,[1] it is in us to change it, and it being in our own choice, if there be no constraint upon us, we must certainly be very strange fools to take arms for that side which is most offensive to us, and to give sickness, want, and contempt a bitter and nauseous taste, if it be in our power to give them a pleasant relish, and if, fortune simply providing the matter, 'tis for us to give it the form. Now, that what we call evil is not so of itself, or at least to that degree that we make it, and that it depends upon us to give it another taste and complexion (for all comes to one), let us examine how that can be maintained.

If the original being of those things we fear had power to lodge itself in us by its own authority, it would then lodge itself alike, and in like manner, in all; for men are all of the same kind, and saving in greater and less proportions, are all provided with the same utensils and instruments to conceive and to judge; but the diversity of opinions we have of those things clearly evidences that they only enter us by composition; one person, peradventure, admits them in their true being, but a thousand others give them a new and contrary being in them. We hold death, poverty, and pain for our principal enemies; now, this death, which some repute the most dreadful of all dreadful things, who does not know that others call it the only

[1] From the not unfrequent practice on the part of Montaigne of reiterating identical sentiments, the present passage has been already illustrated by a parallel one in Shakespear's *Hamlet*, ii. 2. See vol. i., p. 99 *supra*. The likeness between the two minds is very striking.

secure harbour from the storms and tempests of life, the sovereign good of nature, the sole support of liberty, and the common and prompt remedy of all evils? And as the one expect it with fear and trembling, the others support it with greater ease than life. That one complains of its facility:—

> "Mors! utinam pavidos vitæ subducere nolles.
> Sed virtus te sola daret!"[1]

Now, let us leave these boastful courages. Theodorus answered Lysimachus, who threatened to kill him, "Thou wilt do a brave feat," said he, "to attain the force of a cantharides."[2] The majority of philosophers are observed to have either purposely anticipated, or hastened and assisted their own death. How many ordinary people do we see led to execution, and that not to a simple death, but mixed with shame and sometimes with grievous torments, appear with such assurance, whether through firm courage or natural simplicity, that a man can discover no change from their ordinary condition; settling their domestic affairs, commending themselves to their friends, singing, preaching, and addressing the people, nay, sometimes sallying into jests, and drinking to their companions, quite as well as Socrates?

One that they were leading to the gallows told them they must not take him through such a street, lest a merchant who lived there should arrest him by the way for an old debt. Another told the hangman he must not touch his neck for fear of making him laugh, he was so ticklish. Another answered his confessor, who promised him he

[1] "O death! wouldst that thou might spare the coward, but that valour alone should pay thee tribute."—Lucan, iv. 580.
[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 40.

should that day sup with our Lord, "Do you go then," said he, "in my room; for I for my part keep fast to-day." Another having called for drink, and the hangman having drunk first, said he would not drink after him, for fear of catching some evil disease. Everybody has heard the tale of the Picard, to whom, being upon the ladder, they presented a common wench, telling him (as our law does sometimes permit) that if he would marry her they would save his life; he, having a while considered her and perceiving that she halted: "Come, tie up, tie up," said he, "she limps." And they tell another story of the same kind of a fellow in Denmark, who being condemned to lose his head, and the like condition being proposed to him upon the scaffold, refused it, by reason the girl they offered him had hollow cheeks and too sharp a nose. A servant at Toulouse being accused of heresy, for the sum of his belief referred himself to that of his master, a young student, prisoner with him, choosing rather to die than suffer himself to be persuaded that his master could err. We read that of the inhabitants of Arras, when Louis XI. took that city, a great many let themselves be hanged rather than they would say, "God save the King." And amongst that mean-souled race of men, the buffoons, there have been some who would not leave their fooling at the very moment of death. One that the hangman was turning off the ladder cried: "Launch the galley," an ordinary saying of his. Another, whom at the point of death his friends had laid upon a bed of straw before the fire, the physician asking him where his pain lay: "Betwixt the bench and the fire," said he, and the priest, to give him extreme unction, groping for his feet which his pain had made him pull up to him: "You will find

them," said he, "at the end of my legs." To one who being present exhorted him to recommend himself to God: "Why, who goes thither?" said he; and the other replying: "It will presently be yourself, if it be His good pleasure." "Shall I be sure to be there by to-morrow night?" said he. "Do but recommend yourself to Him," said the other, "and you will soon be there." "I were best then," said he, "to carry my recommendations myself."

In the kingdom of Narsingah to this day the wives of their priests are buried alive with the bodies of their husbands; all other wives are burnt at their husbands' funerals, which they not only firmly but cheerfully undergo. At the death of their king, his wives and concubines, his favourites, all his officers, and domestic servants, who make up a whole people, present themselves so gaily to the fire where his body is burnt, that they seem to take it for a singular honour to accompany their master in death. During our late wars of Milan, where there happened so many takings and retakings of towns, the people, impatient of so many changes of fortune, took such a resolution to die, that I have heard my father say he there saw a list taken of five-and-twenty masters of families who made themselves away in one week's time: an incident somewhat resembling that of the Xanthians, who being besieged by Brutus, fell—men, women, and children—into such a furious appetite of dying, that nothing can be done to evade death which they did not to avoid life; insomuch that Brutus had much difficulty in saving a very small number.[1]

Every opinion is of force enough to cause itself to be espoused at the expense of life. The first

[1] "Only fifty were saved."—Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*, c. 8.

article of that valiant oath that Greece took and observed in the Median war, was that every one should sooner exchange life for death, than their own laws for those of Persia. What a world of people do we see in the wars betwixt the Turks and the Greeks, rather embrace a cruel death than uncircumcise themselves to admit of baptism? An example of which no sort of religion is incapable.

The kings of Castile having banished the Jews out of their dominions, John, king of Portugal, in consideration of eight crowns a-head, sold them a retreat into his for a certain limited time, upon condition that the time fixed coming to expire they should begone, and he to furnish them with shipping to transport them into Africa. The day comes, which once lapsed they were given to understand that such as were afterward found in the kingdom should remain slaves; vessels were very slenderly provided; and those who embarked in them were rudely and villainously used by the passengers, who, besides other indignities, kept them cruising upon the sea, one while forwards and another backwards, till they had spent all their provisions, and were constrained to buy of them at so dear a rate and so long withal, that they set them not on shore till they were all stripped to the very shirts. The news of this inhuman usage being brought to those who remained behind, the greater part of them resolved upon slavery and some made a show of changing religion. Emmanuel, the successor of John, being come to the crown, first set them at liberty, and afterwards altering his mind, ordered them to depart his country, assigning three ports for their passage. He hoped, says Bishop Osorius, no contemptible Latin historian of these later times, that the favour of the liberty he had given them having

failed of converting them to Christianity, yet the difficulty of committing themselves to the mercy of the mariners and of abandoning a country they were now habituated to and were grown very rich in, to go and expose themselves in strange and unknown regions, would certainly do it. But finding himself deceived in his expectation, and that they were all resolved upon the voyage, he cut off two of the three ports he had promised them, to the end that the length and incommodity of the passage might reduce some, or that he might have opportunity, by crowding them all into one place, the more conveniently to execute what he had designed, which was to force all the children under fourteen years of age from the arms of their fathers and mothers, to transport them from their sight and conversation, into a place where they might be instructed and brought up in our religion. He says that this produced a most horrid spectacle: the natural affection betwixt the parents and their children, and moreover their zeal to their ancient belief, contending against this violent decree, fathers and mothers were commonly seen making themselves away, and by a yet much more rigorous example, precipitating out of love and compassion their young children into wells and pits, to avoid the severity of this law. As to the remainder of them, the time that had been prefixed being expired, for want of means to transport them they again returned into slavery. Some also turned Christians, upon whose faith, as also that of their posterity, even to this day, which is a hundred years since, few Portuguese can yet rely; though custom and length of time are much more powerful counsellors in such changes than all other constraints whatever. In the town of Castelnaudari, fifty heretic Albigeois

at one time suffered themselves to be buried alive in one fire rather than they would renounce their opinions :—

"Quoties non modo ductores nostri, sed universi etiam exercitus, ad non dubiam mortem concurrerunt?"[1]

I have seen an intimate friend of mine run headlong upon death with a real affection, and that was rooted in his heart by divers plausible arguments which he would never permit me to dispossess him of, and upon the first honourable occasion that offered itself to him, precipitate himself into it, without any manner of visible reason, with an obstinate and ardent desire of dying. We have several examples in our own times of persons, even young children, who for fear of some little inconvenience have despatched themselves. And what shall we not fear, says one of the ancients[2] to this purpose, if we dread that which cowardice itself has chosen for its refuge?

Should I here produce a long catalogue of those, of all sexes and conditions and sects, even in the most happy ages, who have either with great constancy looked death in the face, or voluntarily sought it, and sought it not only to avoid the evils of this life, but some purely to avoid the satiety of living, and others for the hope of a better condition elsewhere, I should never have done. Nay, the number is so infinite that in truth I should have a better bargain on't to reckon up those who have feared it. This one therefore shall serve for all: Pyrrho the philosopher being one day in a boat in a very great tempest, shewed to those he saw the most affrighted about him, and encouraged them,

[1] "How often have not only our leaders, but whole armies, run to a certain and manifest death."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 37.

[2] Seneca, *Ep.*, 70.

by the example of a hog that was there, nothing at all concerned at the storm.[1] Shall we then dare to say that this advantage of reason, of which we so much boast, and upon the account of which we think ourselves masters and emperors over the rest of all creation, was given us for a torment? To what end serves the knowledge of things if it renders us more unmanly? if we thereby lose the tranquillity and repose we should enjoy without it? and if it put us into a worse condition than Pyrrho's hog? Shall we employ the understanding that was conferred upon us for our greatest good to our own ruin; setting ourselves against the design of nature and the universal order of things, which intend that every one should make use of the faculties, members, and means he has to his own best advantage?

But it may, peradventure, be objected against me: Your rule is true enough as to what concerns death; but what will you say of indigence? What will you, moreover, say of pain, which Aristippus, Hieronimus, and most of the sages have reputed the worst of evils; and those who have denied it by word of mouth have, however, confessed it in effect? Posidonius being extremely tormented with a sharp and painful disease, Pompeius came to visit him, excusing himself that he had taken so unseasonable a time to come to hear him discourse of philosophy. "The gods forbid," said Posidonius to him, "that pain should ever have the power to hinder me from talking," and thereupon fell immediately upon a discourse of the contempt of pain[2]: but, in the meantime, his own infirmity was playing his part, and plagued him to purpose; to which he cried out, "Thou mayest work thy will,

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 68.

[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 13.

pain, and torment me with all the power thou hast, but thou shalt never make me say that thou art an evil." This story that they make such a clutter withal, what has it to do, I fain would know, with the contempt of pain? He only fights it with words, and in the meantime, if the shootings and dolours he felt did not move him, why did he interrupt his discourse? Why did he fancy he did so great a thing in forbearing to confess it an evil? All does not here consist in the imagination; our fancies may work upon other things: but here is the certain science that is playing its part, of which our senses themselves are judges:—

"Qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa sit omnis."[1]

Shall we persuade our skins that the jerks of a whip agreeably tickle us, or our taste that a potion of aloes is *vin de Grave*? Pyrrho's hog is here in the same predicament with us; he is not afraid of death, 'tis true, but if you beat him he will cry out to some purpose. Shall we force the general law of nature, which in every living creature under heaven is seen to tremble under pain? The very trees seem to groan under the blows they receive. Death is only felt by reason, forasmuch as it is the motion of an instant:—

"Aut fuit, aut veniet; nihil est præsentis in illâ"[2] . . .

"Morsque minus pœnæ, quam mora mortis, habet"[3];

a thousand beasts, a thousand men, are sooner dead than threatened. That also which we principally

[1] "Which, if they be not true, all reasoning may also be false."—Lucretius, iv. 486.

[2] "Death has been, or will come: there is nothing of the present in it."—Estienne de la Boetie, *Satires*.

[3] "And death has less pain than the delay of it."—Ovid, *Ep. Ariadne to Theseus*, v. 42.

pretend to fear in death is pain, its ordinary forerunner: yet, if we may believe a holy father:—

"Malam mortem non facit, nisi quod sequitur mortem."[1]

And I should yet say, more probably, that neither that which goes before nor that which follows after is at all of the appurtenances of death.

We excuse ourselves falsely: and I find by experience that it is rather the impatience of the imagination of death that makes us impatient of pain, and that we find it doubly grievous as it threatens us with death. But reason accusing our cowardice for fearing a thing so sudden, so inevitable, and so insensible, we take the other as the more excusable pretence. All ills that carry no other danger along with them but simply the evils themselves, we treat as things of no danger: the toothache or the gout, painful as they are, yet being not reputed mortal, who reckons them in the catalogue of diseases?

But let us presuppose that in death we principally regard the pain; as also there is nothing to be feared in poverty but the miseries it brings along with it of thirst, hunger, cold, heat, watching, and the other inconveniences it makes us suffer, still we have nothing to do with anything but pain. I will grant, and very willingly, that it is the worst incident of our being (for I am the man upon earth who the most hates and avoids it, considering that hitherto, I thank God, I have had so little traffic with it), but still it is in us, if not to annihilate, at least to lessen it by patience; and though the body and the reason should mutiny, to

[1] "That which follows death makes death bad."—St. Augustin, *De Civit. Dei*, i. 11. Montaigne seems to have shared the opinion that while he did not desire to die, he did not fear the notion of being dead.

maintain the soul, nevertheless, in good condition. Were it not so, who had ever given reputation to virtue, valour, force, magnanimity, and resolution? where were their parts to be played if there were no pain to be defied?

"Avida est periculi virtus."[1]

Were there no lying upon the hard ground, no enduring, armed at all points, the meridional heats, no feeding upon the flesh of horses and asses, no seeing a man's self hacked and hewed to pieces, no suffering a bullet to be pulled out from amongst the shattered bones, no sewing up, cauterising and searching of wounds, by what means were the advantage we covet to have over the vulgar to be acquired? 'Tis far from flying evil and pain, what the sages say, that of actions equally good, a man should most covet to perform that wherein there is greater labour and pain.

"Non est enim hilaritate, nec lasciviâ, nec risu, aut joco comite levitatis, sed sæpe etiam tristes firmitate et constantiâ sunt beati."[2]

And for this reason it has ever been impossible to persuade our forefathers but that the victories obtained by dint of force and the hazard of war were not more honourable than those performed in great security by stratagem or practice:—

"Lætius est, quoties magno sibi constat honestum."[3]

Besides, this ought to be our comfort, that naturally,

[1] "Courage is greedy of danger."—Seneca, *De Providentiâ*, c. 4.

[2] "For men are not only happy by mirth and wantonness, by laughter and jesting, the companion of levity, but ofttimes the serious sort reap felicity from their firmness and constancy."—Cicero, *De Finib.*, ii. 10.

[3] "A good deed is all the more a satisfaction by how much the more it has cost us."—Lucan, ix. 404.

if the pain be violent, 'tis but short; and if long, nothing violent:—

> "Si gravis, brevis;
> Si longus, levis."[1]

Thou wilt not feel it long if thou feelest it too much; it will either put an end to itself or to thee; it comes to the same thing; if thou canst not support it, it will export thee:—

"Memineris maximos morte finiri; parvos multa habere intervalla requietis; mediocrium nos esse dominos: ut si tolerabiles sint, feramus; sin minus, e vitâ, quum ea non placeat, tanquam e theatro, exeamus."[2]

That which makes us suffer pain with so much impatience is the not being accustomed to repose our chiefest contentment in the soul; that we do not enough rely upon her who is the sole and sovereign mistress of our condition. The body, saving in the greater or less proportion, has but one and the same bent and bias; whereas the soul is variable into all sorts of forms; and subject to herself and to her own empire, all things whatsoever, both the senses of the body and all other accidents: and therefore it is that we ought to study her, to inquire into her, and to rouse up all her powerful faculties. There is neither reason, force, nor prescription that can anything prevail against her inclination and choice. Of so many thousands of biasses that she has at her disposal, let us give her one proper to our repose and con-

[1] Cicero, *De Finib.*, ii. 29.

[2] "Remember that the greatest pains are terminated by death; that slighter pains have long intermissions of repose, and that we are masters of the more moderate sort: so that, if they be tolerable, we bear them; if not, we can go out of life, as from a theatre, when it does not please us."—*Ibid.*, i. 15.

versation, and then we shall not only be sheltered and secured from all manner of injury and offence, but moreover gratified and obliged, if she will, with evils and offences. She makes her profit indifferently of all things ; error, dreams, serve her to good use, as loyal matter to lodge us in safety and contentment. 'Tis plain enough to be seen that 'tis the sharpness of our mind that gives the edge to our pains and pleasures : beasts that have no such thing, leave to their bodies their own free and natural sentiments, and consequently in every kind very near the same, as appears by the resembling application of their motions. If we would not disturb in our members the jurisdiction that appertains to them in this, 'tis to be believed it would be the better for us, and that nature has given them a just and moderate temper both to pleasure and pain ; neither can it fail of being just, being equal and common. But seeing we have enfranchised ourselves from her rules to give ourselves up to the rambling liberty of our own fancies, let us at least help to incline them to the most agreeable side. Plato[1] fears our too vehemently engaging ourselves with pain and pleasure, forasmuch as these too much knit and ally the soul to the body ; whereas I rather, quite contrary, by reason it too much separates and disunites them. As an enemy is made more fierce by our flight, so pain grows proud to see us truckle under her. She will surrender upon much better terms to them who make head against her : a man must oppose and stoutly set himself against her. In retiring and giving ground, we invite and pull upon ourselves the ruin that threatens us. As the body is more firm in an encounter, the more stiffly

[1] In the *Phædo.*

and obstinately it applies itself to it, so is it with the soul.

But let us come to examples, which are the proper game of folks of such feeble force as myself; where we shall find that it is with pain as with stones, that receive a brighter or a duller lustre according to the foil they are set in, and that it has no more room in us than we are pleased to allow it :—

"Tantum doluerunt, quantum doloribus se inseruerunt."[1]

We are more sensible of one little touch of a surgeon's lancet than of twenty wounds with a sword in the heat of fight. The pains of child-bearing, said by the physicians and by God himself[2] to be great, and which we pass through with so many ceremonies—there are whole nations that make nothing of them. I set aside the Lacedæmonian women, but what else do you find in the Swiss among our foot-soldiers, if not that, as they trot after their husbands, you see them to-day carry the child at their necks that they carried yesterday in their bellies? The counterfeit Egyptians we have amongst us go themselves to wash theirs, so soon as they come into the world, and bathe in the first river they meet. Besides so many wenches as daily drop their children by stealth, as they conceived them, that fair and noble wife of Sabinus, a patrician of Rome, for another's interest, endured alone, without help, without crying out, or so much as a groan, the bearing of twins.[3] A poor simple boy of Lacedæmon having stolen a fox (for they more fear the shame of

[1] "They suffered so much the more, as they associated themselves with suffering."—St. Augustin, *De Civit. Dei*, i. 10.

[2] Genesis, iii. 16.

[3] Plutarch, *On Love*, c. 34.

stupidity in stealing than we do the punishment of the knavery), and having got it under his coat, rather endured the tearing out of his bowels than he would discover his theft.[1] And another offering incense at a sacrifice, suffered himself to be burned to the bone by a coal that fell into his sleeve, rather than disturb the ceremony. And there have been a great number, for a sole trial of virtue, following their institutions, who have at seven years old endured to be whipped to death without changing their countenance. And Cicero has seen them fight in parties, with fists, feet, and teeth, till they have fainted and sunk down, rather than confess themselves overcome :—

"Nunquam naturam mos vinceret; est enim ea semper invicta; sed nos umbris, deliciis, otio, languore, desidiâ animum infecimus; opinionibus maloque more delinitum, mollivimus."[2]

Every one knows the story of Scævola, that having slipped into the enemy's camp to kill their general, and having missed his blow, to repair his fault, by a more strange invention and to deliver his country, he boldly confessed to Porsenna, who was the king he had a purpose to kill, not only his design, but moreover added that there were then in the camp a great number of Romans, his accomplices in the enterprise, as good men as he ; and to show what a one he himself was, having caused a pan of burning coals to be brought, he saw and endured his arm to broil and roast, till the king himself, conceiving horror at the sight, commanded the pan to be taken away.[3] What would you say of him

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, c. 14.

[2] "Custom could never conquer nature ; she is ever invincible ; but we have infected the mind with shadows, delights, negligence, sloth ; we have grown effeminate through opinions and corrupt morality."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 27.

[3] Livy, ii. 12.

that would not vouchsafe to respite his reading in a book whilst he was under incision?[1] And of the other that persisted to mock and laugh in contempt of the pains inflicted upon him[2]; so that the provoked cruelty of the executioners that had him in handling, and all the inventions of tortures redoubled upon him, one after another, spent in vain, gave him the bucklers? But he was a philosopher. But what! a gladiator of Cæsar's endured, laughing all the while, his wounds to be searched, lanced, and laid open :—

"Quis mediocris gladiator ingemuit? Quis vultum mutavit unquam? Quis non modo stetit, verum etiam decubuit, turbiter? Quis, quum decubuisset, ferrum recipere jussus, collum contraxit?"[3]

Let us bring in the women too. Who has not heard at Paris of her that caused her face to be flayed[4] only for the fresher complexion of a new skin? There are who have drawn good and sound teeth to make their voices more soft and sweet, or to place the other teeth in better order. How many examples of the contempt of pain have we in that sex? What can they not do, what do they fear to do, for never so little hope of an addition to their beauty?

"Vallere queis cura est albos a stirpe capillos,
Et faciem, demptâ pelle, referre novam."[5]

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 78.

[2] Idem. Montaigne probably refers to Anaxarchus, whom Nicocreon, tyrant of Cyprus, had cut to pieces.

[3] "What ordinary gladiator ever groaned? Which of them ever changed countenance? Which of them not only stood or fell indecorously? Which, when he had fallen and was commanded to receive the stroke of the sword, contracted his neck."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 17.

[4] Compare what Montaigne says just below.

[5] "Who carefully pluck out their grey hairs by the roots, and renew their faces by peeling off the old skin."—Tibullus, i. 8, 45.

I have seen some of them swallow sand, ashes, and do their utmost to destroy their stomachs to get pale complexions. To make a fine Spanish body, what racks will they not endure of girding and bracing, till they have notches in their sides cut into the very quick, and sometimes to death?

It is an ordinary thing with several nations at this day to wound themselves in good earnest to gain credit to what they profess; of which our king[1] relates notable examples of what he has seen in Poland and done towards himself.[2] But besides this, which I know to have been imitated by some in France, when I came from that famous assembly of the Estates at Blois, I had a little before seen a maid in Picardy, who to manifest the ardour of her promises, as also her constancy, give herself, with a bodkin she wore in her hair, four or five good lusty stabs in the arm, till the blood gushed out to some purpose. The Turks give themselves great scars in honour of their mistresses, and to the end they may the longer remain, they presently clap fire to the wound, where they hold it an incredible time to stop the blood and form the cicatrice; people that have been eyewitnesses of it have both written and sworn it to me. But for ten aspers[3] there are there every day fellows to be found that will give themselves a good deep slash in the arms or thighs. I am willing, however, to have the testimonies nearest to us when we have most need of them; for Christendom furnishes us with enough. After the example of our blessed Guide there have been many who have crucified themselves. We learn by testimony very worthy of belief,[4] that King

[1] Henry III. [2] And see De Thou, *Hist.*, lib. lviii.
[3] A Turkish coin worth a small fraction of a penny. The Rhodian *aspro* was a different piece. [4] Joinville:

St. Louis wore a hair-shirt till in his old age his confessor gave him a dispensation to leave it off; and that every Friday he caused his shoulders to be drubbed by his priest with five small chains of iron which were always carried about amongst his night accoutrements for that purpose.

Guillaume, our last Duke of Guienne, the father of that Eleanor who transmitted that duchy to the houses of France and England, continually for the last ten or twelve years of his life wore a suit of armour under a religious habit by way of penance. Foulques, Count of Anjou, went as far as Jerusalem, there to cause himself to be whipped by two of his servants, with a rope about his neck, before the sepulchre of our Lord. But do we not, moreover, every Good Friday, in various places, see great numbers of men and women beat and whip themselves till they lacerate and cut the flesh to the very bones? I have often seen it, and 'tis without any enchantment; and it was said there were some amongst them (for they go disguised) who for money undertook by this means to save harmless the religion of others, by a contempt of pain, so much the greater, as the incentives of devotion are more effectual than those of avarice. Q. Maximus buried his son when he was a consul, and M. Cato his when prætor elect, and L. Paulus both his, within a few days one after another, with such a countenance as expressed no manner of grief.[1] I said in my days of one,[2] that he had disappointed the divine justice; for the violent death of three grown-up children of his being one day sent him, for

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iii. 28.

[2] My father has inserted in his copy of the edition of 1877 the name of Polysperchon, the Macedonian general; but I do not observe any such incident in the ordinary account of him, or mention of more than one son.

a severe scourge, as it is to be supposed, he was so far from being afflicted at the accident, that he rather took it for a particular grace and favour of heaven. I do not follow these monstrous humours, though I lost two or three at nurse,[1] if not without grief, at least without repining, and yet there is hardly any accident that pierces nearer to the quick. I see a great many other occasions of sorrow, that should they happen to me I should hardly feel; and have despised some, when they have befallen me, to which the world has given so terrible a figure that I should blush to boast of my constancy :—

"Ex quo intelligitur, non in naturâ, sed in opinione, esse ægritudinem."[2]

Opinion is a powerful party, bold, and without measure. Who ever so greedily hunted after security and repose as Alexander and Cæsar did after disturbance and difficulties? Teres, the father of Sitalces,[3] was wont to say that when he had no wars, he fancied there was no difference betwixt him and his groom.[4] Cato the consul, to secure some cities of Spain from revolt, only interdicting the inhabitants from wearing arms, a great many killed themselves :—

"Ferox gens, nullam vitam rati sine armis esse."[5]

How many do we know who have forsaken the calm and sweetness of a quiet life at home amongst their acquaintance, to seek out the horror of unhabitable deserts; and having precipitated themselves into so abject a condition as to become the

[1] *Montaigne the Essayist*, by Bayle St. John, 1858, ii. 10.
[2] "By which one may understand that grief is not in nature, but in opinion."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iii. 28.
[3] King of Thrace. [4] Plutarch, *Apothegms*.
[5] A fierce people, who thought there was no life without war."—Livy, xxxiv. 17.

scorn and contempt of the world, have hugged themselves with the conceit, even to affectation. Cardinal Borromeo, who died lately at Milan,[1] amidst all the jollity that the air of Italy, his youth, birth, and great riches, invited him to, kept himself in so austere a way of living, that the same robe he wore in summer served him for winter too; he had only straw for his bed, and his hours of leisure from affairs he continually spent in study upon his knees, having a little bread and a glass of water set by his book, which was all the provision of his repast, and all the time he spent in eating.

I know some who consentingly have acquired both profit and advancement from cuckoldom, of which the bare name only affrights so many people.

If the sight be not the most necessary of all our senses, 'tis at least the most pleasant; but the most pleasant and most useful of all our members seem to be those of generation; and yet a great many have conceived a mortal hatred against them only for this, that they were too pleasant, and have deprived themselves of them only for their value: as much thought he of his eyes that put them out. The generality and more solid sort of men look upon abundance of children as a great blessing; I, and some others, think it as great a benefit to be without them. And when you ask Thales why he does not marry, he tells you, because he has no mind to leave any posterity behind him.[2]

That our opinion gives the value to things is very manifest in the great number of those which we do, not so much prizing them, as ourselves, and never considering either their virtues or their use, but only how dear they cost us, as though that were a part of their substance; and we only repute for

[1] In 1584.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, i. 26.

value in them, not what they bring to us, but what we add to them. By which I understand that we are great economisers of our expense: as it weighs, it serves for so much as it weighs. Our opinion will never suffer it to want of its value: the price gives value to the diamond; difficulty to virtue; suffering to devotion; and griping to physic. A certain person,[1] to be poor, threw his crowns into the same sea to which so many come, in all parts of the world, to fish for riches. Epicurus says[2] that to be rich is no relief, but only an alteration, of affairs. In truth, it is not want, but rather abundance, that creates avarice. I will deliver my own experience concerning this affair.

I have since my emergence from childhood lived in three sorts of conditions. The first, which continued for some twenty years, I passed over without any other means but what were casual and depending upon the allowance and assistance of others, without stint, but without certain revenue. I then spent my money so much the more cheerfully, and with so much the less care how it went, as it wholly depended upon my over-confidence of fortune. I never lived more at my ease; I never had the repulse of finding the purse of any of my friends shut against me, having enjoined myself this necessity above all other necessities whatever, by no means to fail of payment at the appointed time, which also they have a thousand times respited, seeing how careful I was to satisfy them; so that I practised at once a thrifty, and withal a kind of alluring, honesty. I naturally feel a kind of pleasure in paying, as if I eased my shoulders of a troublesome weight and freed myself from an image of slavery; as also that I find a ravishing kind of

[1] Aristippus.

[2] Seneca, *Ep.*, 17.

satisfaction in pleasing another and doing a just action. I except payments where the trouble of bargaining and reckoning is required; and in such cases, where I can meet with nobody to ease me of that charge, I delay them, how scandalously and injuriously soever, all I possibly can, for fear of the wranglings for which both my humour and way of speaking are so totally improper and unfit. There is nothing I hate so much as driving a bargain; 'tis a mere traffic of cozenage and impudence, where, after an hour's cheapening and hesitating, both parties abandon their word and oath for five sols' abatement. Yet I always borrowed at great disadvantage; for, wanting the confidence to speak to the person myself, I committed my request to the persuasion of a letter, which usually is no very successful advocate, and is of very great advantage to him who has a mind to deny. I, in those days, more jocundly and freely referred the conduct of my affairs to the stars, than I have since done to my own providence and judgment. Most good managers look upon it as a horrible thing to live always thus in uncertainty, and do not consider, in the first place, that the greatest part of the world live so: how many worthy men have wholly abandoned their own certainties, and yet daily do it, to the winds, to trust to the inconstant favour of princes and of fortune? Cæsar ran above a million of gold, more than he was worth, in debt to become Cæsar; and how many merchants have begun their traffic by the sale of their farms, which they sent into the Indies,

"Tot per impotentia freta"?[1]

In so great a siccity of devotion as we see in these days, we have a thousand and a thousand colleges,

[1] "Through so many ungovernable seas."—Catullus, iv. 18.

that pass it over commodiously enough, expecting every day their dinner from the liberality of Heaven. Secondly, they do not take notice that this certitude upon which they so much rely is not much less uncertain and hazardous than hazard itself. I see misery as near beyond two thousand crowns a year as if it stood close by me; for besides that it is in the power of chance to make a hundred breaches to poverty through the greatest strength of our riches—there being very often no mean betwixt the highest and the lowest fortune:—

"Fortuna vitrea est: tum, quum splendet, frangitur,"[1]

and to turn all our barricadoes and bulwarks topsy-turvy, I find that, by divers causes, indigence is as frequently seen to inhabit with those who have estates as with those that have none; and that, peradventure, it is then far less grievous when alone than when accompanied with riches. These flow more from good management than from revenue;

"Faber est suæ quisque fortunæ"[2];

and an uneasy, necessitous, busy, rich man seems to me more miserable than he that is simply poor.

"In divitiis inopes, quod genus egestatis gravissimum est."[3]

The greatest and most wealthy princes are by poverty and want driven to the most extreme necessity; for can there be any more extreme

[1] "Fortune is made of glass: at the moment when it is resplendent, it is broken."—*Mimi P. Syri.*

[2] "Every one is the maker of his own fortune."—Sallust, *De Repub. Ord.*, i. 1.

[3] "Poor in the midst of riches, which is the sorest kind of poverty."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 74.

than to become tyrants and unjust usurpers of their subjects' goods and estates?

My second condition of life was to have money of my own, wherein I so ordered the matter that I had soon laid up a very notable sum out of a mean fortune, considering with myself that that only was to be reputed having which a man reserves from his ordinary expense, and that a man cannot absolutely rely upon revenue he hopes to receive, how clear soever the hope may be. For what, said I, if I should be surprised by such or such an accident? And after such-like vain and vicious imaginations, would very learnedly, by this hoarding of money, provide against all inconveniences; and could, moreover, answer such as objected to me that the number of these was too infinite, that if I could not lay up for all, I could, however, do it at least for some and for many. Yet was not this done without a great deal of solicitude and anxiety of mind; I kept it very close, and though I dare talk so boldly of myself, never spoke of my money, but falsely, as others do, who being rich, pretend to be poor, and being poor, pretend to be rich, dispensing their consciences from ever telling sincerely what they have: a ridiculous and shameful prudence. Was I going a journey? Methought I was never enough provided: and the more I loaded myself with money, the more also was I loaded with fear, one while of the danger of the roads, another of the fidelity of him who had the charge of my baggage, of whom, as some others that I know, I was never sufficiently secure if I had him not always in my eye. If I chanced to leave my cash-box behind me, O, what strange suspicions and anxiety of mind did I enter into, and, which was worse, without daring to acquaint anybody with

it. My mind was eternally taken up with such things as these, so that, all things considered, there is more trouble in keeping money than in getting it. And if I did not altogether so much as I say, or was not really so scandalously solicitous of my money as I have made myself out to be, yet it cost me something at least to restrain myself from being so. I reaped little or no advantage by what I had, and my expenses seemed nothing less to me for having the more to spend; for, as Bion said,[1] the hairy men are as angry as the bald to be pulled; and after you are once accustomed to it and have once set your heart upon your heap, it is no more at your service; you cannot find in your heart to break it: 'tis a building that you will fancy must of necessity all tumble down to ruin if you stir but the least pebble; necessity must first take you by the throat before you can prevail upon yourself to touch it; and I would sooner have pawned anything I had, or sold a horse, and with much less constraint upon myself, than have made the least breach in that beloved purse I had so carefully laid by. But the danger was that a man cannot easily prescribe certain limits to this desire (they are hard to find in things that a man conceives to be good), and to stint this good husbandry so that it may not degenerate into avarice: men still are intent upon adding to the heap and increasing the stock from sum to sum, till at last they vilely deprive themselves of the enjoyment of their own proper goods, and throw all into reserve, without making any use of them at all. According to this rule, they are the richest people in the world who are set to guard the walls and gates of a wealthy city. All moneyed men I

[1] Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, c. 8.

conclude to be covetous. Plato[1] places corporal or human goods in this order: health, beauty, strength, riches; and riches, says he, are not blind, but very clear-sighted, when illuminated by prudence. Dionysius the son[2] did a very handsome act upon this subject; he was informed that one of the Syracusans had hid a treasure in the earth, and thereupon sent to the man to bring it to him, which he accordingly did, privately reserving a small part of it only to himself, with which he went to another city, where being cured of his appetite of hoarding, he began to live at a more liberal rate; which Dionysius hearing, caused the rest of his treasure to be restored to him, saying, that since he had learned to use it, he very willingly returned it back to him.

I continued some years in this hoarding humour, when I know not what good demon fortunately put me out of it, as he did the Syracusan, and made me throw abroad all my reserve at random, the pleasure of a certain journey I took at very great expense having made me spurn this fond love of money underfoot; by which means I am now fallen into a third way of living (I speak what I think of it), doubtless much more pleasant and regular, which is, that I live at the height of my revenue; sometimes the one, sometimes the other may perhaps exceed, but 'tis very little and but rarely that they differ. I live from hand to mouth, and content myself in having sufficient for my present and ordinary expense; for as to extraordinary occasions, all the laying up in the world would never suffice. And 'tis the greatest folly imaginable to expect that fortune should ever sufficiently

[1] *Laws*.

[2] Or rather the father, according to Plutarch in his *Apothegms*.

arm us against herself; 'tis with our own arms that we are to fight her; accidental ones will betray us in the pinch of the business. If I lay up, 'tis for some near and contemplated purpose; not to purchase lands, of which I have no need, but to purchase pleasure:—

"Non esse cupidum, pecunia est; non esse emacem, vertigal est."[1]

I neither am in any great apprehension of wanting, nor in desire of any more:—

"Divitiarum fructus est in copiâ; copiam declarat satietas."[2]

And I am very well pleased that this reformation in me has fallen out in an age naturally inclined to avarice, and that I see myself cleared of a folly so common to old men, and the most ridiculous of all human follies.

Pheraulas, a man that had run through both fortunes, and found that the increase of substance was no increase of appetite either to eating or drinking, sleeping or the enjoyment of his wife, and who on the other side felt the care of his economics lie heavy upon his shoulders, as it does on mine, was resolved to please a poor young man, his faithful friend, who panted after riches, and made him a gift of all his, which were excessively great, and, moreover, of all he was in the daily way of getting by the liberality of Cyrus, his good master, and by the war; conditionally that he should take care handsomely to maintain and plentifully to entertain him as his guest and friend; which being accordingly done, they afterwards lived very

[1] "Not to be covetous, is money; not to be acquisitive, is revenue." —Cicero, *Paradox.*, vi. 3.

[2] "The fruit of riches is in abundance; satiety declares abundance." —Idem, *ibid.*, vi. 2.

happily together, both of them equally content with the change of their condition.[1] 'Tis an example that I could imitate with all my heart; and I very much approve the fortune of the aged prelate whom I see to have so absolutely stripped himself of his purse, his revenue, and care of his expense, committing them one while to one trusty servant, and another while to another, that he has spun out a long succession of years, as ignorant, by this means, of his domestic affairs as a mere stranger. The confidence in another man's virtue is no light evidence of a man's own, and God willingly favours such a confidence. As to what concerns him of whom I am speaking, I see nowhere a better governed house, more nobly and constantly maintained than his. Happy to have regulated his affairs to so just a proportion that his estate is sufficient to do it without his care or trouble, and without any hindrance, either in the spending or laying it up, to his other more quiet employments, and more suitable both to his place and liking.

Plenty, then, and indigence depend upon the opinion every one has of them; and riches no more than glory or health have other beauty or pleasure than he lends them by whom they are possessed. Every one is well or ill at ease, according as he so finds himself; not he whom the world believes, but he who believes himself to be so, is content; and in this alone belief gives itself being and reality. Fortune does us neither good nor hurt; she only presents us the matter and the seed, which our soul, more powerful than she, turns and applies as she best pleases; the sole cause and sovereign mistress of her own happy or unhappy condition. All external accessions receive taste and colour

[1] Xenophon, *Cyropædia*, viii. 3.

from the internal constitution, as clothes warm us, not with their heat, but our own, which they are fit to cover and nourish; he who would shield therewith a cold body, would do the same service for the cold, for so snow and ice are preserved. And, certes, after the same manner that study is a torment to an idle man, abstinence from wine to a drunkard, frugality to the spendthrift, and exercise to a lazy, tender-bred fellow, so it is of all the rest. The things are not so painful and difficult of themselves, but our weakness or cowardice makes them so. To judge of great and high matters requires a suitable soul; otherwise we attribute the vice to them which is really our own. A straight oar seems crooked in the water: it does not only import that we see the thing, but how and after what manner we see it.[1]

After all this,[2] why, amongst so many discourses that by so many arguments persuade men to despise death and to endure pain, can we not find out one that helps us? And of so many sorts of imaginations as have so prevailed upon others as to persuade them to do so, why does not every one apply some one to himself, the most suitable to his own humour? If he cannot digest a strong-working decoction to eradicate the evil, let him at least take a lenitive to ease it:—

"Opinio est quædam effeminata ac levis, nec in dolore magis, quam eadem in voluptate: qua quum liquescimus, fluimusque mollitiâ, apis aculeum sine clamore ferre non possumus. Totum in eo est, ut tibi imperes."[3]

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[1] See Seneca, *Ep.*, 81.

[2] The rest of the chapter is mainly taken from Seneca, *Ep.*, 81.

[3] "It is an effeminate and flimsy opinion, nor more so in pain than in pleasure, in which, while we are at our ease, we cannot bear without a cry the sting of a bee. The whole business is to commend thyself." —Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 22.

As to the rest, a man does not transgress philosophy by permitting the acrimony of pains and human frailty to prevail so much above measure; for they constrain her to go back to her unanswerable replies: "If it be ill to live in necessity, at least there is no necessity upon a man to live in necessity"[1]: "No man continues ill long but by his own fault." He who has neither the courage to die nor the heart to live, who will neither resist nor fly, what can we do with him?

CHAPTER XLI

NOT TO COMMUNICATE ONE'S GLORY

Of all the follies of the world, that which is most universally received is the solicitude of reputation and glory; which we are fond of to that degree as to abandon riches, peace, life, and health, which are effectual and substantial goods, to pursue this vain phantom and empty word, that has neither body nor hold to be taken of it:—

> "La fama, ch' invaghisce a un dolce suono
> Gli superbi mortali, et par si bella,
> E un eco, un sogno, anzi d'un sogno un' ombra,
> Ch' ad ogni vento si dilegua e sgombra."[2]

And of all the irrational humours of men, it should seem that the philosophers themselves are among the last and the most reluctant to disengage them-

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 12.

[2] "Fame, which with alluring sound charms proud mortals, and appears so fair, is but an echo, a dream, nay, the shadow of a dream, which at every breath vanishes and dissolves."—Tasso, *Gierus.*, xiv. 63.

selves from this: 'tis the most restive and obstinate of all:—

"Quia etiam bene proficientes animos tentare non cessat." [1]

There is not any one of which reason so clearly accuses the vanity; but it is so deeply rooted in us that I dare not determine whether any one ever clearly discharged himself from it or no. After you have said all and believed all has been said to its prejudice, it produces so intestine an inclination in opposition to your best arguments that you have little power to resist it; for, as Cicero says,[2] even those who most controvert it, would yet that the books they write about it should visit the light under their own names, and seek to derive glory from seeming to despise it. All other things are communicable and fall into commerce: we lend our goods and stake our lives for the necessity and service of our friends; but to communicate a man's honour, and to robe another with a man's own glory, is very rarely seen.

And yet we have some examples of that kind. Catulus Luctatius in the Cimbrian war, having done all that in him lay to make his flying soldiers face about upon the enemy, ran himself at last away with the rest, and counterfeited the coward, to the end his men might rather seem to follow their captain than to fly from the enemy[3]; which was to abandon his own reputation in order to cover the shame of others. When Charles V. came into Provence in the year 1537, 'tis said that Antonio de Leva, seeing the emperor positively resolved upon this expedition, and believing it would redound very much to his honour, did,

[1] "Because it ceases not to assail even well-directed minds."—St. Augustin, *De Civit. Dei*, v. 14.

[2] *Oration for Archias*, c. 11.

[3] Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, c. 8.

nevertheless, very stiffly oppose it in the council, to the end that the entire glory of that resolution should be attributed to his master, and that it might be said his own wisdom and foresight had been such as that, contrary to the opinion of all, he had brought about so great an enterprise; which was to do him honour at his own expense. The Thracian ambassadors coming to comfort Archileonida, the mother of Brasidas, upon the death of her son, and commending him to that height as to say he had not left his like behind him, she rejected this private and particular commendation to attribute it to the public: "Tell me not that," said she; "I know the city of Sparta has many citizens both greater and of greater worth than he."[1] In the battle of Creçy, the Prince of Wales, being then very young, had the vanguard committed to him: the main stress of the battle happened to be in that place, which made the lords who were with him, finding themselves overmatched, send to King Edward to advance to their relief. He inquired of the condition his son was in, and being answered that he was alive and on horseback: "I should, then, do him wrong," said the king, "now to go and deprive him of the honour of winning this battle he has so long and so bravely sustained; what hazard soever he runs, that shall be entirely his own"; and, accordingly, would neither go nor send, knowing that if he went, it would be said all had been lost without his succour, and that the honour of the victory would be wholly attributed to him.

"Semper enim quod postremum adjectum est, id rem totam videtur traxisse."[2]

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[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*, art. *Brasidas*.

[2] "For always that which is last added, seems to have accomplished the whole affair."—Livy, xxvii. 45.

Many at Rome thought, and would usually say, that the greatest of Scipio's acts were in part due to Lælius, whose constant practice it was still to advance and support Scipio's grandeur and renown, without any care of his own.[1] And Theopompus, king of Sparta, to him who told him the republic could not miscarry since he knew so well how to command, "Tis rather," answered he, "because the people know so well how to obey."[2] As women succeeding to peerages had, notwithstanding their sex, the privilege to attend and give their votes in the trials that appertained to the jurisdiction of peers; so the ecclesiastical peers, notwithstanding their profession, were obliged to attend our kings in their wars, not only with their friends and servants, but in their own persons. As the Bishop of Beauvais did, who being with Philip Augustus at the battle of Bouvines, had a notable share in that action; but he did not think it fit for him to participate in the fruit and glory of that violent and bloody trade. He with his own hand reduced several of the enemy that day to his mercy, whom he delivered to the first gentleman he met either to kill or receive them to quarter, referring the whole execution to this other hand; and he did this with regard to William, Earl of Salisbury, whom he gave up to Messire Jehan de Nesle.[3] With a like subtlety of conscience to that I have just named, he would kill but not wound, and for that reason ever fought with a mace.[4] And a certain person of my time, being reproached by the king that he had laid hands on a priest, stiffly and positively denied he had done any such thing: the meaning of which was, he had cudgelled and kicked him.

[1] Plutarch, *Instructions for Statesmen*, c. 7.
[2] Idem, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*, art. *Theopompus*.
[3] *Mém. de Jean de Tillet*, 1578, p. 220. [4] Mezeray, *Hist. de France*.

CHAPTER XLII

OF THE INEQUALITY WHICH IS BETWEEN US

Plutarch says somewhere[1] that he does not find so great a difference betwixt beast and beast as he does betwixt man and man; which he says in reference to the internal qualities and perfections of the soul. And, in truth, I find so vast a distance betwixt Epaminondas, according to my judgment of him, and some that I know, who are yet men of good sense, that I could willingly enhance upon Plutarch, and say that there is more difference betwixt such and such a man than there is betwixt such a man and such a beast:—

"Dii immortales homo homini quid præstat!"[2]

and that there are as many and innumerable degrees of mind as there are cubits betwixt this and heaven. But as touching the estimate of men, 'tis strange that, ourselves excepted, no other creature is esteemed beyond its proper qualities; we commend a horse for his strength and sureness of foot:—

"Nempe volucrem
Sic laudamus equum, facili cui plurima palma
Fervet, et exsultat rauco victoria Circo,"[3]

and not for his rich caparison; a greyhound for his speed of heels, not for his fine collar; a hawk for her wing, not for her gesses and bells. Why,

[1] In the essay, *The Brute Creation exercises Reason.*

[2] "Immortal gods! why does man excel man?"—Terence, *Eunuchus*, ii. 2, 1. Montaigne refers us to this comedy, where a similar sentiment occurs; but his quotation comes from *Phormio*, v. 3, 7.

[3] "So we praise the swift horse, for whose easy mastery many a hand glows in applause, and victory exults in the hoarse circus."—Juvenal, viii. 57.

in like manner, do we not value a man for what is properly his own? He has a great train, a beautiful palace, so much credit, so many thousand pounds a year: all these are about him, but not in him. You will not buy a pig in a poke: if you cheapen a horse,[1] you will see him stripped of his housing-cloths, you will see him naked and open to your eye; or if he be clothed, as they anciently were wont to present them to princes to sell, 'tis only on the less important parts, that you may not so much consider the beauty of his colour or the breadth of his crupper, as principally to examine his legs, eyes, and feet, which are the members of greatest use:—

> "Regibus hic mos est: ubi equos mercantur, opertos
> Inspiciunt; ne, si facies, ut sæpe, decora
> Molli fulta pede est, emptorem inducat hiantem"[2]:

why, in giving your estimate of a man, do you prize him wrapped and muffled up in clothes? He then discovers nothing to you but such parts as are not in the least his own, and conceals those by which alone one may rightly judge of his value. 'Tis the price of the blade that you inquire into, not of the scabbard: you would not peradventure bid a farthing for him, if you saw him stripped. You are to judge him by himself and not by what he wears; and, as one of the ancients very pleasantly said: "Do you know why you repute him tall? You reckon withal the height of his pattens."[3] The pedestal is no part of the statue. Measure him without his stilts; let him lay aside his revenues and his titles; let him present himself in his shirt.

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 80.

[2] "This is the custom of kings: when they buy horses, they have open inspection, lest, if a fair head, as often chances, is supported by a weak foot, it should tempt the gaping purchaser."—Horace, *Sat.*, i. 2, 86.

[3] Seneca, *Ep.*, 76.

Then examine if his body be sound and sprightly, active and disposed to perform its functions. What soul has he? Is she beautiful, capable, and happily provided of all her faculties? Is she rich of what is her own, or of what she has borrowed? Has fortune no hand in the affair? Can she, without winking, stand the lightning of swords? is she indifferent whether her life expire by the mouth or through the throat? Is she settled, even and content? This is what is to be examined, and by that you are to judge of the vast differences betwixt man and man. Is he :—

> "Sapiens, sibique imperiosus,
> Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent;
> Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores
> Fortis; et in seipso totus teres atque rotundus,
> Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari;
> In quem manca ruit semper fortuna?"[1]

such a man is five hundred cubits above kingdoms and duchies; he is an absolute monarch in and to himself :—

> "Sapiens, . . . Pol! ipse fingit fortunam sibi"[2];

what remains for him to covet or desire?—

> "Nonne videmus,
> Nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi ut, quoi
> Corpore sejunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur,
> Jucundo sensu, curâ semotu' metuque?"[3]

Compare with such a one the common rabble of mankind, stupid and mean-spirited, servile, instable,

[1] "The wise man, self-governed, whom neither poverty, nor death, nor chains affright: who has the strength to resist his appetites and to contemn honours: who is wholly self-contained: whom no external objects affect: whom fortune assails in vain."—Horace, *Sat.*, ii. 7, 83.

[2] "The wise man is the master of his own fortune."—Plautus, *Trin.*, ii. 2, 84.

[3] "Do we not see that human nature asks no more for itself than that, free from bodily pain, it may exercise its mind agreeably, exempt from care and fear."—Lucretius, ii. 16.

and continually floating with the tempest of various passions, that tosses and tumbles them to and fro, and all depending upon others, and you will find a greater distance than betwixt heaven and earth ; and yet the blindness of common usage is such that we make little or no account of it ; whereas if we consider a peasant and a king, a nobleman and a vassal, a magistrate and a private man, a rich man and a poor, there appears a vast disparity, though they differ no more, as a man may say, than in their breeches.

In Thrace the king was distinguished from his people after a very pleasant and especial manner ; he had a religion by himself, a god all his own, and which his subjects were not to presume to adore, which was Mercury, whilst, on the other hand, he disdained to have anything to do with theirs, Mars, Bacchus, and Diana. And yet they are no other than pictures that make no essential dissimilitude ; for as you see actors in a play representing the person of a duke or an emperor upon the stage, and immediately after return to their true and original condition of valets and porters, so the emperor, whose pomp and lustre so dazzle you in public :—

> "——et grandes viridi cum luce smaragdi
> Auro includuntur, teriturque thalassina vestis
> Assidue, et Veneris sudorem exercita potat"[1];

do but peep behind the curtain, and you will see nothing more than an ordinary man, and peradventure more contemptible than the meanest of his subjects:—

> "Ille beatus introrsum est, istius bracteata felicitas est"[2];

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[1] "And large emeralds with their green lustre are set in gold, and the sea-coloured robe is constantly worn, and absorbs the sweat of Venus."—Lucretius, iv. 1123. The original *smaragdus* might be any green stone.

[2] "The one is happy in himself; the happiness of the other is counterfeit."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 115.

cowardice, irresolution, ambition, spite, and envy agitate him as much as another :—

> "Non enim gazæ, neque consularis
> Submovet lictor miseros tumultus
> Mentis, et curas laqueata circum
> Tecta volantes." [1]

Care and fear attack him even in the centre of his battalions :—

> "Re verâque metus hominum curæque sequaces
> Nec metuunt sonitus armorum, nec fera tela ;
> Audacterque inter reges, rerumque potentes
> Versantur, neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro." [2]

Do fevers, gout, and apoplexies spare him any more than one of us? When old age hangs heavy upon his shoulders, can the yeomen of his guard ease him of the burden? When he is astounded with the apprehension of death, can the gentlemen of his bedchamber comfort and assure him ? When jealousy or any other caprice swims in his brain, can our compliments and ceremonies restore him to his good-humour? The canopy embroidered with pearl and gold he lies under has no virtue against a violent fit of the colic :—

> "Nec calidæ citius decedunt corpore febres
> Textilibus si in picturis, ostroque rubenti
> Jactaris, quam si plebeiâ in veste cubandum est." [3]

The flatterers of Alexander the Great possessed him that he was the son of Jupiter ; but being one day wounded, and observing the blood stream from

[1] "For not treasures, nor the consular lictor, can remove the miserable tumults of the mind, nor cares that fly about panelled ceilings."—Horace, *Od.*, ii. 16, 9.

[2] "And in truth the fears and haunting cares of men fear not the clash of arms nor points of darts, and mingle boldly with great kings and men in authority, nor respect the glitter of gold."—Lucretius, ii. 47.

[3] "Nor do burning fevers quit you sooner if you are stretched on a couch of rich tapestry and in a vest of purple dye, than if you be in a coarse blanket."—Idem, ii. 34.

his wound: "What say you now, my masters," said he, "is not this blood of a crimson colour and purely human? This is not of the complexion of that which Homer makes to issue from the wounded gods."[1] The poet Hermodorus had written a poem in honour of Antigonus, wherein he called him the son of the sun: "He who has the emptying of my close-stool," said Antigonus, "knows to the contrary."[2] He is but a man at best, and if he be deformed or ill-qualified from his birth, the empire of the universe cannot set him to rights:—

"Puellæ
Hunc rapiant; quidquid calcaverit hic, rosa fiat,"[3]

what of all that, if he be a fool? even pleasure and good fortune are not relished without vigour and understanding:—

"Hæc perinde sunt, ut ilius animus; qui ea possidet:
Qui uti scit, ei bona; illi, qui non utitur recte, mala."[4]

Whatever the benefits of fortune are, they yet require a palate to relish them. 'Tis fruition, and not possession, that renders us happy:—

"Non domus et fundus, non æris acervus, et auri
Ægroto domini deduxit corpore febres,
Non animo curas. Valeat possessor oportet,
Qui comportatis rebus bene cogitat uti:
Qui cupit, aut metuit, juvat illum sic domus et res,
Ut lippum pictæ tabulæ, fomenta podagrum."[5]

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[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms*, art. *Alexander*.

[2] Idem, *ibid.*, art. *Antigonus*.

[3] "Let girls carry him off; wherever he steps let there spring up a rose!"—Persius, *Sat.*, ii. 38.

[4] "Things are, as is the mind of their possessor; who knows how to use them, to him they are good; to him who abuses them, ill."—Terence, *Heaut.*, i. 3, 21.

[5] "'Tis not lands, or a heap of brass and gold, that has removed fevers from the ailing body of the owner, or cares from his mind. The possessor must be healthy, if he thinks to make good use of his realised wealth. To him who is covetous or timorous his house and estate are as a picture to a blind man, or a fomentation to a gouty."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 2, 47.

He is a sot, his taste is palled and flat ; he no more enjoys what he has than one that has a cold relishes the flavour of canary, or than a horse is sensible of his rich caparison. Plato is in the right when he tells us that health, beauty, vigour, and riches, and all the other things called goods, are equally evil to the unjust as good to the just, and the evil on the contrary the same. And therefore where the body and the mind are in disorder, to what use serve these external conveniences : considering that the least prick with a pin, or the least passion of the soul, is sufficient to deprive one of the pleasure of being sole monarch of the world. At the first twitch of the gout it signifies much to be called Sir and Your Majesty !—

"Totus et argento conflatus, totus et auro"[1] ;

does he not forget his palaces and grandeurs? If he be angry, can his being a prince keep him from looking red and looking pale, and grinding his teeth like a madman? Now, if he be a man of parts and of right nature, royalty adds very little to his happiness :—

"Si ventri bene, si lateri est, pedibusque tuis, nil
Divitiæ poterunt regales addere majus"[2] ;

he discerns 'tis nothing but counterfeit and gullery. Nay, perhaps he would be of King Seleucus' opinion, that he who knew the weight of a sceptre would not stoop to pick it up, if he saw it lying before him, so great and painful are the duties incumbent upon a good king.[3] Assuredly it can be no easy task to rule others, when we find it so hard a matter to

[1] "Wholly made up of silver and gold."—Tibullus, i. 2, 70.

[2] "If it is well with thy belly, thy side and thy feet, regal wealth will be able to add nothing."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 12, 5.

[3] Plutarch, *If a Sage should Meddle with Affairs of State*, c. 12.

govern ourselves; and as to dominion, that seems so charming, the frailty of human judgment and the difficulty of choice in things that are new and doubtful considered, I am very much of opinion that it is far more easy and pleasant to follow than to lead; and that it is a great settlement and satisfaction of mind to have only one path to walk in, and to have none to answer for but a man's self:—

> "Ut satius multo jam sit parere quietum,
> Quam regere imperio res velle."[1]

To which we may add that saying of Cyrus, that no man was fit to rule but he who in his own worth was of greater value than those he was to govern; but King Hiero in Xenophon says further, that in the fruition even of pleasure itself they are in a worse condition than private men; forasmuch as the opportunities and facility they have of commanding those things at will takes off from the delight that ordinary folks enjoy:—

> "Pinguis amor, nimiumque patens, in tædia nobis
> Vertitur, et, stomacho dulcis ut esca, nocet."[2]

Can we think that the singing boys of the choir take any great delight in music? the satiety rather renders it troublesome and tedious to them. Feasts, balls, masquerades and tiltings delight such as but rarely see, and desire to see, them; but having been frequently at such entertainments, the relish of them grows flat and insipid. Nor do women so much delight those who make a common practice of the sport. He who will not give himself leisure to be thirsty can never find the true pleasure of

[1] "'Tis much better quietly to obey than wish to rule."—Lucretius, v. 1126.

[2] "Love in excess and too palpable turns to weariness, and, like sweetmeats to the stomach, is injurious."—Ovid, *Amor.*, ii. 19, 25.

drinking. Farces and tumbling tricks are pleasant to the spectators, but a wearisome toil to those by whom they are performed. And that this is so, we see that princes divert themselves sometimes in disguising their quality, awhile to depose themselves, and to stoop to the poor and ordinary way of living of the meanest of their people :—

> "Plerumque gratæ divitibus vices
> Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum
> Cœnæ, sine aulæis et ostro,
> Sollicitam explicuere frontem."[1]

Nothing is so distasteful and clogging as abundance. What appetite would not be baffled to see three hundred women at its mercy, as the grand signor has in his seraglio? And, of his ancestors, what fruition or taste of sport did he reserve to himself, who never went hawking without seven thousand falconers? And besides all this, I fancy that this lustre of grandeur brings with it no little disturbance and uneasiness upon the enjoyment of the most tempting pleasures; the great are too conspicuous and lie too open to every one's view. Neither do I know to what end a man should more require of them to conceal their errors, since what is only reputed indiscretion in us, the people in them brand with the names of tyranny and contempt of the laws, and, besides their proclivity to vice, are apt to hold that it is a heightening of pleasure to them, to insult over and to trample upon public observances. Plato, indeed, in his *Gorgias*, defines a tyrant to be one who in a city has licence to do whatever his own will leads him to do; and by reason of this impunity, the display and publication

[1] "The rich are often pleased with variety; and the neat supper in a poor cottage, without tapestry and purple, has relaxed the anxious brow."—Horace, *Od.*, iii. 29, 13.

of their vices do ofttimes more mischief than the vice itself. Every one fears to be pried into and overlooked; but princes are so, even to their very gestures, looks and thoughts, the people conceiving they have right and title to be judges of them: besides that the blemishes of the great naturally appear greater by reason of the eminence and lustre of the place where they are seated, and that a mole or a wart appears greater in them than a wide gash in others. And this is the reason why the poets feign the amours of Jupiter to be performed in the disguises of so many borrowed shapes, and that amongst the many amorous practices they lay to his charge, there is only one, as I remember, where he appears in his own majesty and grandeur.

But let us return to Hiero, who further complains of the inconveniences he found in his royalty, in that he could not look abroad and travel the world at liberty, being as it were a prisoner in the bounds and limits of his own dominion, and that in all his actions he was evermore surrounded with an importunate crowd. And in truth, to see our kings sit all alone at table, environed with so many people prating about them, and so many strangers staring upon them, as they always are, I have often been moved rather to pity than to envy their condition. King Alfonso was wont to say, that in this asses were in a better condition than kings, their masters permitting them to feed at their own ease and pleasure, a favour that kings cannot obtain of their servants. And it has never come into my fancy that it could be of any great benefit to the life of a man of sense to have twenty people prating about him when he is at stool; or that the services of a man of ten thousand livres a year, or that has taken Casale or defended Siena, should be either

more commodious or more acceptable to him, than those of a good groom of the chamber who understands his place. The advantages of sovereignty are in a manner but imaginary: every degree of fortune has in it some image of principality. Cæsar calls all the lords of France, having free franchise within their own demesnes, roitelets or petty kings; and in truth, the name of sire excepted, they go pretty far towards kingship; for do but look into the provinces remote from court, as Brittany for example; take notice of the train, the vassals, the officers, the employments, service, ceremony, and state of a lord who lives retired from court in his own house, amongst his own tenants and servants; and observe withal the flight of his imagination; there is nothing more royal; he hears talk of his master once a year, as of a king of Persia, without taking any further recognition of him, than by some remote kindred his secretary keeps in some register. And, to speak the truth, our laws are easy enough, so easy that a gentleman of France scarce feels the weight of sovereignty pinch his shoulders above twice in his life. Real and effectual subjection only concerns such amongst us as voluntarily thrust their necks under the yoke, and who design to get wealth and honours by such services: for a man that loves his own fireside, and can govern his house without falling by the ears with his neighbours or engaging in suits of law, is as free as a Duke of Venice:—

"Paucos servitus, plures servitutem tenent."[1]

But that which Hiero is most concerned at is, that he finds himself stripped of all friendship,

[1] "Servitude enchains few, but many enchain themselves to servitude."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 22. Montaigne was thinking of La Boetie. I am afraid that the essayist had not studied the Venetian system of government.

deprived of all mutual society, wherein the true and most perfect fruition of human life consists. For what testimony of affection and goodwill can I extract from him that owes me, whether he will or no, all that he is able to do? Can I form any assurance of his real respect to me, from his humble way of speaking and submissive behaviour, when these are ceremonies it is not in his choice to deny? The honour we receive from those that fear us is not honour; those respects are due to royalty and not to me:—

> "Maximum hoc regni bonum est
> Quod facta domini cogitur populus sui
> Quam ferre, tam laudare."[1]

Do I not see that the wicked and the good king, he that is hated and he that is beloved, have the one as much reverence paid him as the other? My predecessor was, and my successor shall be, served with the same ceremony and state. If my subjects do me no harm, 'tis no evidence of any good affection; why should I look upon it as such, seeing it is not in their power to do it if they would? No one follows me or obeys my commands upon the account of any friendship betwixt him and me; there can be no contracting of friendship where there is so little relation and correspondence: my own height has put me out of the familiarity of and intelligence with men; there is too great disparity and disproportion betwixt us. They follow me either upon the account of decency and custom; or rather my fortune, than me, to increase their own. All they say to me or do for me is but outward paint, appearance, their liberty being on all

[1] "'Tis the greatest benefit of a kingdom that the people is forced to commend, as well as to bear the acts of the ruler."—Seneca, *Thyestes*, ii. 1, 30.

parts restrained by the great power and authority I have over them. I see nothing about me but what is dissembled and disguised.

The Emperor Julian being one day applauded by his courtiers for his exact justice: "I should be proud of these praises," said he, "did they come from persons that durst condemn or disapprove the contrary, in case I should do it."[1] All the real advantages of princes are common to them with men of meaner condition ('tis for the gods to mount winged horses and feed upon ambrosia): they have no other sleep, nor other appetite than we; the steel they arm themselves withal is of no better temper than that we also use; their crowns neither defend them from the rain nor the sun.

Diocletian, who wore a crown so fortunate and revered, resigned it to retire to the felicity of a private life; and some time after, the necessity of public affairs requiring that he should reassume his charge, he made answer to those who came to court him to it: "You would not offer," said he, "to persuade me to this, had you seen the fine order of the trees I have planted in my orchard, and the fair melons I have sown in my garden."[2]

In Anacharsis' opinion, the happiest state of government would be where, all other things being equal, precedence should be measured out by the virtues, and repulses by the vices of men.[3]

When King Pyrrhus prepared for his expedition into Italy, his wise counsellor Cyneas, to make him sensible of the vanity of his ambition: "Well, sir," said he, "to what end do you make all this mighty preparation?" "To make myself master of Italy,"

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 10.
[2] Aurelius Victor, art. *Diocletian*.
[3] Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Sages*, c. 13.

replied the king. "And what after that is done?" said Cyneas. "I will pass over into Gaul and Spain," said the other. "And what then?" "I will then go to subdue Africa; and lastly, when I have brought the whole world to my subjection, I will sit down and rest content at my own ease." "For God sake, sir," replied Cyneas, "tell me what hinders that you may not, if you please, be now in the condition you speak of? Why do you not now at this instant settle yourself in the state you seem to aim at, and spare all the labour and hazard you interpose?"[1]

> "Nimirum, quia non cognovit, quæ esset habendi
> Finis, et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas."[2]

I will conclude with an old versicle, that I think very apt to the purpose:—

> "Mores cuique sui fingunt fortunam."[3]

CHAPTER XLIII

OF SUMPTUARY LAWS

THE way by which our laws attempt to regulate idle and vain expenses in meat and clothes, seems to be quite contrary to the end designed. The true way would be to beget in men a contempt of silks and gold, as vain, frivolous, and useless; whereas we augment to them the honours, and

[1] Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, c. 7.

[2] "Forsooth because he does not know what should be the limit of acquisition, and altogether how far real pleasure should increase."—Lucretius, v. 1431.

[3] "Every man frames his own fortune."—Cornelius Nepos, *Life of Atticus*, c. ii. Montaigne had already quoted a similar maxim from Sallust in his 40th Essay.

enhance the value of such things, which, sure, is a very improper way to create a disgust. For to enact that none but princes shall eat turbot, shall wear velvet or gold lace, and interdict these things to the people, what is it but to bring them into a greater esteem, and to set every one more agog to eat and wear them? Let kings leave off these ensigns of grandeur; they have others enough besides; those excesses are more excusable in any other than a prince. We may learn by the example of several nations better ways of exterior distinction of quality (which, truly, I conceive to be very requisite in a state) enough, without fostering to this purpose such corruption and manifest inconvenience. 'Tis strange how suddenly and with how much ease custom in these indifferent things establishes itself and becomes authority. We had scarce worn cloth a year, in compliance with the court, for the mourning of Henry II., but that silks were already grown into such contempt with every one, that a man so clad was presently concluded a citizen: silks were divided betwixt the physicians and surgeons, and though all other people almost went in the same habit, there was, notwithstanding, in one thing or other, sufficient distinction of the several conditions of men. How suddenly do greasy chamois and linen doublets become the fashion in our armies, whilst all neatness and richness of habit fall into contempt? Let kings but lead the dance and begin to leave off this expense, and in a month the business will be done throughout the kingdom, without edict or ordinance; we shall all follow. It should be rather proclaimed, on the contrary, that no one should wear scarlet or goldsmiths' work but courtesans and tumblers.

Seleucus by the like invention reclaimed the corrupted manners of the Locrians.[1] His laws were, that no free woman should be allowed any more than one maid to follow her, unless she was drunk: nor was to stir out of the city by night, wear jewels of gold about her, or go in an embroidered robe, unless she was a professed and public prostitute; that, bravos excepted, no man was to wear a gold ring, nor be seen in one of those effeminate robes woven in the city of Miletus. By which infamous exceptions he discreetly diverted his citizens from superfluities and pernicious pleasures, and it was a project of great utility to attract men by honour and ambition to their duty and obedience.

Our kings can do what they please in such external reformations; their own inclination stands in this case for a law:—

"Quicquid principes faciunt, præcipere videntur."[2]

Whatever is done at court passes for a rule through the rest of France. Let the courtiers fall out with these abominable breeches, that discover so much of those parts should be concealed; these great bellied doublets, that make us look like I know not what, and are so unfit to admit of arms; these long effeminate locks of hair; this foolish custom of kissing what we present to our equals, and our hands in saluting them, a ceremony in former times only due to princes. Let them not permit that a gentleman shall appear in place of respect without his sword, unbuttoned and untrussed, as though he came from the house of office; and that, contrary to

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xii. 20.

[2] "What princes themselves do, they seem to prescribe."—Quintil., *Declam.*, 3.

the custom of our forefathers and the particular privilege of the nobles of this kingdom, we stand a long time bare to them in what place soever, and the same to a hundred others, so many tiercelets and quartelets of kings we have got nowadays and other like vicious innovations: they will see them all presently vanish and cried down. These are, 'tis true, but superficial errors; but they are of ill augury, and enough to inform us that the whole fabric is crazy and tottering, when we see the roughcast of our walls to cleave and split.

Plato in his *Laws*[1] esteems nothing of more pestiferous consequence to his city than to give young men the liberty of introducing any change in their habits, gestures, dances, songs, and exercises, from one form to another; shifting from this to that, hunting after novelties, and applauding the inventors; by which means manners are corrupted and the old institutions come to be nauseated and despised. In all things, saving only in those that are evil, a change is to be feared; even the change of seasons, winds, viands, and humours. And no laws are in their true credit, but such to which God has given so long a continuance that no one knows their beginning, or that there ever was any other.

CHAPTER XLIV

OF SLEEPING

Reason directs that we should always go the same way, but not always at the same pace. And, consequently, though a wise man ought not so much to give the reins to human passions as to let him

[1] Book vii.

deviate from the right path, he may, notwithstanding, without prejudice to his duty, leave it to them to hasten or to slacken his speed, and not fix himself like a motionless and insensible Colossus. Could virtue itself put on flesh and blood, I believe the pulse would beat faster going on to an assault than in going to dinner: that is to say, there is a necessity she should heat and be moved upon this account. I have taken notice, as of an extraordinary thing, of some great men, who in the highest enterprises and most important affairs have kept themselves in so settled and serene a calm, as not at all to break their sleep. Alexander the Great, on the day assigned for that furious battle betwixt him and Darius, slept so profoundly and so long in the morning, that Parmenio was forced to enter his chamber, and coming to his bedside, to call him several times by his name, the time to go to fight compelling him so to do. The Emperor Otho, having put on a resolution to kill himself that night, after having settled his domestic affairs, divided his money amongst his servants, and set a good edge upon a sword he had made choice of for the purpose, and now staying only to be satisfied whether all his friends had retired in safety, he fell into so sound a sleep that the gentlemen of his chamber heard him snore. The death of this emperor has in it circumstances paralleling that of the great Cato, and particularly this just related: for Cato being ready to despatch himself, whilst he only stayed his hand in expectation of the return of a messenger he had sent to bring him news whether the senators he had sent away were put out from the Port of Utica, he fell into so sound a sleep, that they heard him snore in the next room; and the man, whom he had sent to

the port, having awakened him to let him know that the tempestuous weather had hindered the senators from putting to sea, he despatched away another messenger, and composing again himself in the bed, settled to sleep, and slept till by the return of the last messenger he had certain intelligence they were gone.[1] We may here further compare him with Alexander in the great and dangerous storm that threatened him by the sedition of the tribune Metellus, who, attempting to publish a decree for the calling in of Pompey with his army into the city at the time of Catiline's conspiracy, was only and that stoutly opposed by Cato, so that very sharp language and bitter menaces passed betwixt them in the senate about that affair; but it was the next day, in the forenoon, that the controversy was to be decided, where Metellus, besides the favour of the people and of Cæsar—at that time of Pompey's faction—was to appear accompanied with a rabble of slaves and gladiators; and Cato only fortified with his own courage and constancy; so that his relations, domestics, and many virtuous people of his friends were in great apprehensions for him; and to that degree, that some there were who passed over the whole night without sleep, eating, or drinking, for the danger they saw him running into; his wife and sisters did nothing but weep and torment themselves in his house; whereas, he, on the contrary, comforted every one, and after having supped after his usual manner, went to bed, and slept profoundly till morning, when one of his fellow-tribunes roused him to go to the encounter. The knowledge we have of the greatness of this man's courage by the rest of his life, may warrant us certainly to judge

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Cato of Utica*, c. 19.

that his indifference proceeded from a soul so much elevated above such accidents, that he disdained to let it take any more hold of his fancy than any ordinary incident.

In the naval engagement that Augustus won of Sextus Pompeius in Sicily, just as they were to begin the fight, he was so fast asleep that his friends were compelled to wake him to give the signal of battle: and this was it that gave Mark Antony afterwards occasion to reproach him that he had not the courage so much as with open eyes to behold the order of his own squadrons, and not to have dared to present himself before the soldiers, till first Agrippa had brought him news of the victory obtained. But as to the young Marius, who did much worse (for the day of his last battle against Sylla, after he had marshalled his army and given the word and signal of battle, he laid him down under the shade of a tree to repose himself, and fell so fast asleep that the rout and flight of his men could hardly waken him, he having seen nothing of the fight), he is said to have been at that time so extremely spent and worn out with labour and want of sleep, that nature could hold out no longer. Now, upon what has been said, the physicians may determine whether sleep be so necessary that our lives depend upon it: for we read that King Perseus of Macedon, being prisoner at Rome, was killed by being kept from sleep; but Pliny instances such as have lived long without sleep. Herodotus speaks of nations where the men sleep and wake by half-years, and they who write the life of the sage Epimenides affirm that he slept seven-and-fifty years together.

CHAPTER XLV

OF THE BATTLE OF DREUX

Our battle of Dreux[1] is remarkable for several extraordinary incidents; but such as have no great kindness for M. de Guise, nor much favour his reputation, are willing to have him thought to blame, and that his making a halt and delaying time with the forces he commanded, whilst the Constable, who was general of the army, was racked through and through with the enemy's artillery, his battalion routed, and himself taken prisoner, is not to be excused; and that he had much better have run the hazard of charging the enemy in flank, than staying for the advantage of falling in upon the rear, to suffer so great and so important a loss. But, besides what the event demonstrated, he who will consider it without passion or prejudice will easily be induced to confess that the aim and design, not of a captain only, but of every private soldier, ought to regard the victory in general, and that no particular occurrences, how nearly soever they may concern his own interest, should divert him from that pursuit. Philopœmen,[2] in an encounter with Machanidas, having sent before a good strong party of his archers and slingers to begin the skirmish, and these being routed and hotly pursued by the enemy, who, pushing on the fortune of their arms, and in that pursuit passing by the battalion where Philopœmen was, though

[1] December 19, 1562, in which the Catholics, under the command of the Duc de Guise and the Constable de Montmorenci, defeated the Protestants, commanded by the Prince de Condé. See Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, vol. xviii., p. 354.

[2] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 6.

his soldiers were impatient to fall on, he did not think fit to stir from his post nor to present himself to the enemy to relieve his men, but having suffered these to be chased and cut in pieces before his face, charged in upon the enemy's foot when he saw them left unprotected by the horse, and notwithstanding that they were Lacedæmonians, yet taking them in the nick, when thinking themselves secure of the victory, they began to disorder their ranks; he did this business with great facility, and then put himself in pursuit of Machanidas. Which case is very like that of Monsieur de Guise.

In that bloody battle betwixt Agesilaus and the Bœotians, which Xenophon,[1] who was present at it, reports to be the sharpest that he had ever seen, Agesilaus waived the advantage that fortune presented him, to let the Bœotian battalions pass by and then to charge them in the rear, how certain soever he might make himself of the victory, judging it would rather be an effect of conduct than valour, to proceed that way; and therefore, to show his prowess, rather chose with a marvellous ardour of courage to charge them in the front; but he was well beaten and well wounded for his pains, and constrained at last to disengage himself, and to take the course he had at first neglected; opening his battalion to give way to this torrent of Bœotians, and they being passed by, taking notice that they marched in disorder, like men who thought themselves out of danger, he pursued and charged them in flank; yet could not so prevail as to bring it to so general a rout but that they leisurely retreated, still facing about upon him till they had retired to safety.

[1] Quoted by Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*.

CHAPTER XLVI

OF NAMES

What variety of herbs soever are shuffled together in the dish, yet the whole mass is swallowed up under one name of a sallet. In like manner, under the consideration of names, I will make a gallimaufry of divers articles.

Every nation has certain names, that, I know not why, are taken in no good sense, as with us, John, William, Benedict. In the genealogy of princes, also, there seem to be certain names fatally affected, as the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Henries in England, the Charleses in France, the Baldwins in Flanders, and the Williams of our ancient Aquitaine, from whence, 'tis said, the name of Guyenne has its derivation[1]; which would seem far fetched were there not as crude derivations in Plato himself.

Item, 'tis a frivolous thing in itself, but nevertheless worthy to be recorded for the strangeness of it, that is written by an eyewitness, that Henry, Duke of Normandy, son of Henry II., king of England, making a great feast in France, the concourse of nobility and gentry was so great, that being, for sport's sake, divided into troops, according to their names, in the first troop, which consisted of Williams, there were found an hundred and ten knights sitting at the table of that name, without reckoning the ordinary gentlemen and servants.

It is as pleasant to distinguish the tables by the names of the guests as it was in the Emperor Geta

[1] Aquitania, the old designation of the country—L'Aquitaine, L'Aquienne, La Guienne.

to distinguish the several courses of his meat by the first letters of the meats themselves; so that those that began with B were served up together, as brawn, beef, bream, bustards, beccaficos; and so of the others. Item, there is a saying that it is a good thing to have a good name, that is to say, credit and a good repute; but besides this, it is really convenient to have a well-sounding name, such as is easy of pronunciation and easy to be remembered, by reason that kings and other great persons do by that means the more easily know and the more hardly forget us; and indeed of our own servants we more frequently call and employ those whose names are most ready upon the tongue. I myself have seen Henry II., when he could not for his heart hit of a gentleman's name of our country of Gascony, and moreover was fain to call one of the queen's maids of honour by the general name of her race, her own family name being so difficult to pronounce or remember; and Socrates thinks it worthy a father's care to give fine names to his children.

Item, 'tis said that the foundation of Nôtre Dame la Grande at Poitiers took its original from hence: that a debauched young fellow formerly living in that place, having got to him a wench, and, at her first coming in, asking her name, and being answered that it was Mary, he felt himself so suddenly pierced through with the awe of religion and the reverence to that sacred name of the Blessed Virgin, that he not only immediately sent the girl away, but became a reformed man and so continued the remainder of his life; and that, in consideration of this miracle, there was erected upon the place where this young man's house stood, first a chapel dedicated to our Lady and afterwards the church that we now see

standing there. This vocal and auricular reproof wrought upon the conscience, and that right into the soul; this that follows, insinuated itself merely by the senses. Pythagoras being in company with some wild young fellows, and perceiving that, heated with the feast, they comploted to go violate an honest house, commanded the singing wench to alter her wanton airs; and by a solemn, grave, and spondaic music, gently enchanted and laid asleep their ardour.[1]

Item, will not posterity say that our modern reformation has been wonderfully delicate and exact, in having not only combated errors and vices, and filled the world with devotion, humility, obedience, peace, and all sorts of virtue; but in having proceeded so far as to quarrel with our ancient baptismal names of Charles, Louis, Francis, to fill the world with Methuselahs, Ezekiels, and Malachis, names of a more spiritual sound? A gentleman, a neighbour of mine, a great admirer of antiquity, and who was always extolling the excellences of former times in comparison with this present age of ours, did not, amongst the rest, forget to dwell upon the lofty and magnificent sound of the gentleman's names of those days, Don Grumedan, Quedregan, Agesilan, which but to hear named he conceived to denote other kind of men than Pierre, Guillot, and Michel.

Item, I am mightily pleased with Jacques Amyot for leaving, throughout a whole French oration, the Latin names entire, without varying and garbling them to give them a French cadence. It seemed a little harsh and rough at first; but already custom, by the authority of his Plutarch, has overcome that novelty. I have often wished that such as

[1] Sextus Empiricus, *Advers. Mathem.*, Book vi.

write histories in Latin would leave our names as they find them and as they are; for in making Vaudemont into Vallemontanus, and metamorphosing names to make them suit better with the Greek or Latin, we know not where we are, and with the persons of the men lose the benefit of the story.

To conclude, 'tis a scurvy custom and of very ill consequence that we have in our kingdom of France to call every one by the name of his manor or seigneury; 'tis the thing in the world that the most prejudices and confounds families and descents. A younger brother of a good family, having a manor left him by his father, by the name of which he has been known and honoured, cannot handsomely leave it; ten years after his decease it falls into the hand of a stranger, who does the same: do but judge whereabouts we shall be concerning the knowledge of these men. We need look no further for examples than our own royal family, where every partition creates a new surname, whilst, in the meantime, the original of the family is totally lost. There is so great liberty taken in these mutations, that I have not in my time seen any one advanced by fortune to any extraordinary condition who has not presently had genealogical titles added to him, new and unknown to his father, and who has not been inoculated into some illustrious stem by good-luck; and the obscurest families are the most apt for falsification. How many gentlemen have we in France who by their own account are of royal extraction? more, I think, than who will confess they are not. Was it not a pleasant passage of a friend of mine? There were several gentlemen assembled together about the dispute of one seigneur with another; which other had, in truth, some pre-eminence of titles and alliances above the ordinary

gentry. Upon the debate of this prerogative, every one, to make himself equal to him, alleged, this one extraction, that another; this, the near resemblance of name, that, of arms; another, an old worm-eaten patent; the very least of them was great-grandchild to some foreign king. When they came to sit down to dinner, my friend, instead of taking his place amongst them, retiring with most profound congés, entreated the company to excuse him for having hitherto lived with them at the saucy rate of a companion; but being now better informed of their quality, he would begin to pay them the respect due to their birth and grandeur, and that it would ill become him to sit down among so many princes—ending this farce with a thousand reproaches: "Let us, in God's name, satisfy ourselves with what our fathers were contented with, with what we are. We are great enough, if we rightly understand how to maintain it. Let us not disown the fortune and condition of our ancestors, and let us lay aside these ridiculous pretences, that can never be wanting to any one that has the impudence to allege them."

Arms have no more security than surnames. I bear azure powdered with trefoils or, with a lion's paw of the same armed gules in fesse. What privilege has this to continue particularly in my house? A son-in-law will transport it into another family, or some paltry purchaser will make them his first arms. There is nothing wherein there is more change and confusion.

But this consideration leads me, perforce, into another subject. Let us pry a little narrowly into, and, in God's name, examine upon what foundation we erect this glory and reputation for which the world is turned topsy-turvy: wherein do we place

this renown that we hunt after with so much pains? It is, in the end, Peter or William that carries it, takes it into his possession, and whom it only concerns. O what a valiant faculty is hope, that in a mortal subject, and in a moment, makes nothing of usurping infinity, immensity, eternity, and of supplying its master's indigence, at its pleasure, with all things he can imagine or desire! Nature has given us this passion for a pretty toy to play withal. And this *Peter* or *William*, what is it but a sound, when all is done? or three or four dashes with a pen, so easy to be varied that I would fain know to whom is to be attributed the glory of so many victories, to Guesquin, to Glesquin, or to Gueaquin?[1] and yet there would be something of greater moment in the case than in Lucian,[2] that Sigma should serve Tau with a process; for

> "Non levia aut ludicra petuntur
> Præmia"[3];

the chase is there in very good earnest: the question is, which of these letters is to be rewarded for so many sieges, battles, wounds, imprisonments, and services done to the crown of France by this famous constable?

Nicholas Denisot[4] never concerned himself further than the letters of his name, of which he has altered the whole contexture to build up by anagram the Count d'Alsinois, whom he has handsomely endowed with the glory of his poetry and painting. The historian Suetonius[5] was satisfied with only the meaning of his name, which made him cashier

[1] The actual name is, as in Froissart, Du Guesclin, though the old writers variously call him Guesquin, Du Gueclin, Du Guyaquin, Du Guesquin, Guesquinius, Guesclinius, Guesquinas, &c.

[2] *Judgment of the Vowels.*

[3] "They aim at no slight or jocular rewards."—*Æneid*, xii. 764.

[4] Painter and poet, born at Le Mans, 1515.

[5] *Life of Otho*, c. 10.

his father's surname, Lenis, to leave Tranquillus successor to the reputation of his writings. Who would believe that Captain Bayard[1] should have no honour but what he derives from the deeds of Peter Terrail; and that Antonio Iscalin[2] should suffer himself to his face to be robbed of the honour of so many navigations and commands at sea and land by Captain Paulin and the Baron de la Garde? Secondly, these are dashes of the pen common to a thousand people. How many are there, in every family, of the same name and surname? and how many more in several families, ages, and countries? History tells us of three of the name of Socrates, of five Platos, of eight Aristotles, of seven Xenophons, of twenty Demetrii, and of twenty Theodores; and how many more she was not acquainted with we may imagine. Who hinders my groom from calling himself Pompey the Great? But after all, what virtue, what authority, or what secret springs are there that fix upon my deceased groom, or the other Pompey, who had his head cut off in Egypt, this glorious renown, and these so much honoured flourishes of the pen, so as to be of any advantage to them?

"Id cinerem et manes credis curare sepultos?"[3]

What sense have the two companions in greatest esteem amongst me, Epaminondas, of this fine

[1] Pierre du Terrail, Chevalier de Bayard.

[2] Antonio Iscalin, called Paulin, from the place of his birth, a town in the Albigeois, and who is called in De Thou's *History* Antonius Iscalinus Adhemarus (and oftener Adæmarus), Polinius Garda. He took the name of De la Garde from a corporal of that name, who passing one day through Paulin with a company of foot-soldiers, took a fancy to him and carried him off with him to make him his boy. He distinguished himself by his wit, valour, and conduct in the several employments which he had, as general of the galleys, ambassador to the Porte and to England. See his eulogium in Brantôme's *Memoirs of Illustrious Men.*

[3] "Do you believe the buried ashes and manes regard such things?"—*Æneid*, iv. 34.

verse that has been so many ages current in his praise :—

"Consiliis nostris laus est attrita Laconum"[1];

or Africanus, of this other :—

"A sole exoriente supra Mæotis paludes
Nemo est qui factis me æquiparare queat."[2]

Survivors indeed tickle themselves with these fine phrases, and by them incited to jealousy and desire, inconsiderately and according to their own fancy, attribute to the dead this their own feeling, vainly flattering themselves that they shall one day in turn be capable of the same character. However :—

"Ad hæc se
Romanus Graiusque, et Barbaras induperator
Erexit ; causus discriminis atque laboris
Inde habuit : tanto major famæ sitis est, quam
Virtutis."[3]

CHAPTER XLVII

OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF OUR JUDGMENT

WELL says this verse :—

Επέων δὲ πολὺς νόμος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.[4]

For example :—

"Vince Annibal', e non seppe usar' poi
Ben la vittoriosa sua ventura."[5]

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[1] "The glory of the Spartans is extinguished by my plans."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 17.

[2] "From where the sun rises over the Palus Mæotis, to where it sets, there is no one whose acts can compare with mine."—Idem, *ibid.*

[3] "For these the Roman, the Greek, and the Barbarian commander hath aroused himself ; he has incurred thence causes of danger and toil : so much greater is the thirst for fame than for virtue."—Juvenal, x. 137.

[4] "There is everywhere much liberty of speech."—*Iliad*, xx. 249.

[5] "Hannibal conquered, but knew not how to make the best use of his victorious venture."—Petrarch, *Son.*, 83.

Such as would improve this argument, and condemn the oversight of our leaders in not pushing home the victory at Moncontour, or accuse the King of Spain of not knowing how to make the best use of the advantage he had against us at St. Quentin,[1] may conclude these oversights to proceed from a soul already drunk with success, or from a spirit which, being full and overgorged with this beginning of good fortune, had lost the appetite of adding to it, already having enough to do to digest what it had taken in: he has his arms full, and can embrace no more: unworthy of the benefit fortune has conferred upon him and the advantage she had put into his hands: for what utility does he reap from it, if, notwithstanding, he give his enemy respite to rally and make head against him? What hope is there that he will dare at another time to attack an enemy reunited and recomposed, and armed anew with anger and revenge, who did not dare to pursue them when routed and unmanned by fear?

"Dum fortuna calet, dum conficit omnia terror."[2]

But withal, what better opportunity can he expect than that he has lost? 'Tis not here, as in fencing, where the most hits gain the prize; for so long as the enemy is on foot, the game is new to begin, and that is not to be called a victory that puts not an end to the war. In the encounter where Cæsar had the worst, near the city of Oricum, he reproached Pompey's soldiers that he had been lost had their general known how to overcome[3]; and afterwards clawed him in a very different fashion when it came to his turn.

[1] August 10, 1556.
[2] "Whilst fortune is fresh, and terror finishes all."—Lucan, vii. 734.
[3] Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 11.

But why may not a man also argue, on the contrary, that it is the effect of a precipitous and insatiate spirit not to know how to bound and restrain its coveting; that it is to abuse the favours of God to exceed the measure He has prescribed them: and that again to throw a man's self into danger after a victory obtained is again to expose himself to the mercy of fortune: that it is one of the greatest discretions in the rule of war not to drive an enemy to despair? Sylla and Marius in the social war, having defeated the Marsians, seeing yet a body of reserve that, prompted by despair, was coming on like enraged brutes to dash in upon them, thought it not convenient to stand their charge. Had not Monsieur de Foix's ardour transported him so furiously to pursue the remains of the victory of Ravenna, he had not obscured it by his own death. And yet the recent memory of his example served to preserve Monsieur d'Anguien from the same misfortune at the battle of Serisoles. 'Tis dangerous to attack a man you have deprived of all means to escape but by his arms, for necessity teaches violent resolutions:—

"Gravissimi sunt morsus irritatæ necessitatis."[1]

"Vincitur haud gratis, jugulo qui provocat hostem."[2]

This was it that made Pharax withhold the King of Lacedæmon, who had won a battle against the Mantineans, from going to charge a thousand Argians, who had escaped in an entire body from the defeat, but rather let them steal off at liberty that he might not encounter valour whetted and enraged by mischance.[3] Clodomir, king of Aquitaine,

[1] "Irritated necessity bites deepest."—Portius Latro., *Declam.*

[2] "He is not readily beaten who provokes the enemy by shewing his throat."—Lucan, iv. 275.

[3] Diodorus Siculus, xii. 25.

after his victory pursuing Gondemar, king of Burgundy, beaten and making off as fast as he could for safety, compelled him to face about and make head, wherein his obstinacy deprived him of the fruit of his conquest, for he there lost his life.

In like manner, if a man were to choose whether he would have his soldiers richly and sumptuously accoutred or armed only for the necessity of the matter in hand, this argument would step in to favour the first, of which opinion was Sertorius, Philopœmen, Brutus, Cæsar,[1] and others, that it is to a soldier an enflaming of courage and a spur to glory to see himself in brave attire; and withal a motive to be more obstinate in fight, having his arms, which are in a manner his estate and whole inheritance to defend; which is the reason, says Xenophon,[2] why those of Asia carried their wives and concubines, with their choicest jewels and greatest wealth, along with them to the wars. But then these arguments would be as ready to stand up for the other side; that a general ought rather to lessen in his men their solicitude of preserving themselves than to increase it; that by such means they will be in a double fear of hazarding their persons, as it will be a double temptation to the enemy to fight with greater resolution where so great booty and so rich spoils are to be obtained; and this very thing has been observed in former times, notably to encourage the Romans against the Samnites. Antiochus, shewing Hannibal the army he had raised, wonderfully splendid and rich in all sorts of equipage, asked him if the Romans would be satisfied with that army? "Satisfied," replied the other, "yes, doubtless, were their avarice never

[1] Suetonius, *Cæsar*, c. 67. [2] *Cyropædia*, iv. 4.

so great."[1] Lycurgus not only forbad his soldiers all manner of bravery in their equipage, but, moreover, to strip their conquered enemies, because he would, as he said, that poverty and frugality should shine with the rest of the battle.[2]

At sieges and elsewhere, where occasion draws us near to the enemy, we willingly suffer our men to brave, rate, and affront him with all sorts of injurious language; and not without some colour of reason: for it is of no little consequence to take from them all hopes of mercy and composition, by representing to them that there is no fair quarter to be expected from an enemy they have incensed to that degree, nor other remedy remaining but in victory. And yet Vitellius found himself deceived in this way of proceeding; for having to do with Otho, weaker in the valour of his soldiers, long unaccustomed to war and effeminated with the delights of the city, he so nettled them at last with injurious language, reproaching them with cowardice and regret for the mistresses and entertainments they had left behind at Rome, that by this means he inspired them with such resolution as no exhortation had had the power to have done, and himself made them fall upon him, with whom their own captains before could by no means prevail. And, indeed, when they are injuries that touch to the quick, it may very well fall out that he who went but unwillingly to work in the behalf of his prince will fall to't with another sort of mettle when the quarrel is his own.

Considering of how great importance is the preservation of the general of an army, and that the universal aim of an enemy is levelled directly at

[1] Aulus Gellius, v. 5.
[2] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*, art. *Lycurgus*.

the head, upon which all the others depend, the course seems to admit of no dispute, which we know has been taken by so many great captains, of changing their habit and disguising their persons upon the point of going to engage. Nevertheless, the inconvenience a man by so doing runs into is not less than that he thinks to avoid; for the captain, by this means being concealed from the knowledge of his own men, the courage they should derive from his presence and example happens by degrees to cool and to decay; and not seeing the wonted marks[1] and ensigns of their leader, they presently conclude him either dead, or that, despairing of the business, he is gone to shift for himself. And experience shows us that both these ways have been successful and otherwise. What befell Pyrrhus in the battle he fought against the Consul Levinus in Italy will serve us to both purposes; for though by shrouding his person under the armour of Megacles and making him wear his own, he undoubtedly preserved his own life, yet, by that very means, he was withal very near running into the other mischief of losing the battle. Alexander, Cæsar, and Lucullus loved to make themselves known in a battle by rich accoutrements and armour of a particular lustre and colour: Agis, Agesilaus, and that great Gilippus,[2] on the contrary, used to fight obscurely armed, and without any imperial attendance or distinction.

Amongst other oversights Pompey is charged withal at the battle of Pharsalia, he is condemned for making his army stand still to receive the enemy's charge; by "reason that" (I shall here steal Plutarch's own words, which are better than

[1] As at the battle of Ivry, in the person of Henry the Great.
[2] Diodorus Siculus, xiii. 33.

mine)[1] "he by so doing deprived himself of the violent impression the motion of running adds to the first shock of arms, and hindered that clashing of the combatants against one another which is wont to give them greater impetuosity and fury; especially when they come to rush in with their utmost vigour, their courages increasing by the shouts and the career; 'tis to render the soldiers' ardour, as a man may say, more reserved and cold." This is what he says. But if Cæsar had come by the worse, why might it not as well have been urged by another, that, on the contrary, the strongest and most steady posture of fighting is that wherein a man stands planted firm without motion; and that they who are steady upon the march, closing up, and reserving their force within themselves for the push of the business, have a great advantage against those who are disordered, and who have already spent half their breath in running on precipitately to the charge? Besides that an army is a body made up of so many individual members, it is impossible for it to move in this fury with so exact a motion as not to break the order of battle, and that the best of them are not engaged before their fellows can come on to help them. In that unnatural battle betwixt the two Persian brothers, the Lacedæmonian Clearchus, who commanded the Greeks of Cyrus' party, led them on softly and without precipitation to the charge; but, coming within fifty paces, hurried them on full speed, hoping in so short a career both to keep their order and to husband their breath, and at the same time to give the advantage of impetuosity and impression both to their persons and their missile arms. Others have regulated this question as to their armies thus:

[1] *Life of Pompey*, c. 19.

if your enemy come full drive upon you, stand firm to receive him; if he stand to receive you, run full drive upon him.[1]

In the expedition of the Emperor Charles V. into Provence, King Francis was put to choose either to go meet him in Italy or to await him in his own dominions; wherein, though he very well considered of how great advantage it was to preserve his own territory entire and clear from the troubles of war, to the end that, being unexhausted of its stores, it might continually supply men and money at need; that the necessity of war requires at every turn to spoil and lay waste the country before us, which cannot very well be done upon one's own; to which may be added, that the country people do not so easily digest such a havoc by those of their own party as from an enemy, so that seditions and commotions might by such means be kindled amongst us; that the licence of pillage and plunder (which are not to be tolerated at home) is a great ease and refreshment against the fatigues and sufferings of war; and that he who has no other prospect of gain than his bare pay will hardly be kept from running home, being but two steps from his wife and his own house; that he who lays the cloth is ever at the charge of the feast; that there is more alacrity in assaulting than defending; and that the shock of a battle's loss in our own bowels is so violent as to endanger the disjointing of the whole body, there being no passion so contagious as that of fear, that is so easily believed, or that so suddenly diffuses itself; and that the cities that should hear the rattle of this tempest at their gates, that should take in their captains and soldiers yet trembling and out of breath, would be in danger in this heat

[1] Plutarch, *Precepts of Marriage*, c. 34.

and hurry to precipitate themselves upon some untoward resolution: notwithstanding all this, so it was that he chose to recall the forces he had beyond the mountains and to suffer the enemy to come to him. For he might, on the other hand, imagine that, being at home and amongst his friends, he could not fail of plenty of all manner of conveniences; the rivers and passes he had at his devotion would bring him in both provisions and money in all security, and without the trouble of convoy; that he should find his subjects by so much the more affectionate to him, by how much their danger was more near and pressing; that having so many cities and barriers to secure him, it would be in his power to give the law of battle at his own opportunity and advantage; and that, if it pleased him to delay the time, under cover and at his ease he might see his enemy founder and defeat himself with the difficulties he was certain to encounter, being engaged in a hostile country, where before, behind, and on every side war would be made upon him; no means to refresh himself or to enlarge his quarters, should diseases infest them, or to lodge his wounded men in safety; no money, no victuals, but at the point of the lance; no leisure to repose and take breath; no knowledge of the ways or country to secure him from ambushes and surprises; and in case of losing a battle, no possible means of saving the remains. Neither is there want of example in both these cases.

Scipio thought it much better to go and attack his enemy's territories in Africa than to stay at home to defend his own and to fight him in Italy, and it succeeded well with him. But, on the contrary, Hannibal in the same war ruined himself by abandoning the conquest of a foreign country to

go and defend his own. The Athenians having left the enemy in their own dominions to go over into Sicily, were not favoured by fortune in their design; but Agathocles, king of Syracuse, found her favourable to him when he went over into Africa and left the war at home.

By which examples we are wont to conclude, and with some reason, that events, especially in war, for the most part depend upon fortune, who will not be governed by nor submit unto human reasons and prudence, according to the poet:—

> "Et male consultis pretium est: prudentia fallit:
> Nec fortuna probat causas, sequiturque merentes,
> Sed vaga per cunctos nullo discrimine fertur.
> Scilicet est aliud, quod nos cogatque regatque
> Majus, et in proprias ducat mortalia leges."[1]

But, to take the thing right, it should seem that our counsels and deliberations depend as much upon fortune as anything else we do, and that she engages also our arguments in her uncertainty and confusion. "We argue rashly and adventurously," says Timæus in Plato, "by reason that, as well as ourselves, our discourses have great participation in the temerity of chance."

CHAPTER XLVIII

OF DESTRIERS

I here have become a grammarian, I who never learned any language but by rote, and who do not yet know adjective, conjunction, or ablative. I

[1] "And there is value in ill counsel: prudence deceives: nor does fortune inquire into causes, nor aid the most deserving, but turns hither and thither without discrimination. Indeed there is a greater power which directs and rules us, and brings mortal affairs under its own laws."—Manilius, iv. 95.

think I have read that the Romans had a sort of horses by them called *funales* or *dextrarios*, which were either led horses, or horses laid on at several stages to be taken fresh upon occasion, and thence it is that we call our horses of service *destriers*; and our romances commonly use the phrase of *adestrer* for *accompagner*, to accompany. They also called those that were trained in such sort, that running full speed, side by side, without bridle or saddle, the Roman gentlemen, armed at all pieces, would shift and throw themselves from one to the other, *desultorios equos*. The Numidian men-at-arms had always a led horse in one hand, besides that they rode upon, to change in the heat of battle :—

"Quibus, desultorum in modum, binos trahentibus equos, inter acerrimam sæpe pugnam, in recentem equum, ex fesso, armatis transultare mos erat: tanta velocitas ipsis, tamque docile equorum genus."[1]

There are many horses trained to help their riders so as to run upon any one that appears with a drawn sword, to fall both with mouth and heels upon any that front or oppose them: but it often happens that they do more harm to their friends than to their enemies; and, moreover, you cannot loose them from their hold, to reduce them again into order, when they are once engaged and grappled, by which means you remain at the mercy of their quarrel. It happened very ill to Artybius, general of the Persian army, fighting, man to man, with Onesilus, king of Salamis, to be mounted upon a horse trained after this manner, it being the occasion of his death, the squire of Onesilus cleaving the horse down with a scythe betwixt

[1] "To whom it was a custom, leading along two horses, often in the hottest fight, to leap armed from a tired horse to a fresh one; so active were the men, and the horses so docile."—Livy, xxiii. 29.

the shoulders as it was reared up upon his master.[1] And what the Italians report, that in the battle of Fornova, the horse of Charles VIII., with kicks and plunges, disengaged his master from the enemy that pressed upon him, without which he had been slain, sounds like a very great chance, if it be true.[2] The Mamalukes make their boast that they have the most ready horses of any cavalry in the world; that by nature and custom they were taught to know and distinguish the enemy, and to fall foul upon them with mouth and heels, according to a word or sign given; as also to gather up with their teeth darts and lances scattered upon the field, and present them to their riders, on the word of command. 'Tis said, both of Cæsar and Pompey, that amongst their other excellent qualities they were both very good horsemen, and particularly of Cæsar, that in his youth, being mounted on the bare back, without saddle or bridle, he could make the horse run, stop, and turn, and perform all its airs, with his hands behind him.[3] As nature designed to make of this person, and of Alexander, two miracles of military art, so one would say she had done her utmost to arm them after an extraordinary manner: for every one knows that Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, had a head inclining to the shape of a bull; that he would suffer himself to be mounted

[1] Herodotus, v. 111, 112.

[2] In the narrative which Philip de Commines has given of this battle, in which he himself was present (lib. viii. ch. 6), he tells us of wonderful performances by the horse on which the king was mounted. The name of the horse was Savoy, and it was the most beautiful horse he had ever seen. During the battle the king was personally attacked, when he had nobody near him but a valet de chambre, a little fellow, and not well armed. "The king," says Commines, "had the best horse under him in the world, and therefore he stood his ground bravely, till a number of his men, not a great way from him, arrived at the critical minute."

[3] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 5.

and governed by none but his master, and that he was so honoured after his death as to have a city erected to his name.[1] Cæsar had also one which had fore-feet like those of a man, his hoofs being divided in the form of fingers, which likewise was not to be ridden by any but Cæsar himself, who, after his death, dedicated his statue to the goddess Venus.[2]

I do not willingly alight when I am once on horseback, for it is the place where, whether well or sick, I find myself most at ease. Plato[3] recommends it for health, as also Pliny says it is good for the stomach and the joints. Let us go further into this matter since here we are.

We read in Xenophon[4] a law forbidding any one who was master of a horse to travel on foot. Trogus Pompeius and Justin[5] say that the Parthians were wont to perform all offices and ceremonies, not only in war but also all affairs whether public or private, make bargains, confer, entertain, take the air, and all on horseback; and that the greatest distinction betwixt freemen and slaves amongst them was that the one rode on horseback and the other went on foot, an institution of which King Cyrus was the founder.

There are several examples in the Roman history (and Suetonius more particularly observes it of Cæsar[6]) of captains who, on pressing occasions, commanded their cavalry to alight, both by that means to take from them all hopes of flight, as also for the advantage they hoped in this sort of fight.

"Quo haud dubie superat Romanus,"[7]

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[1] Aulus Gellius, v. 2.
[2] Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 61.
[3] *Laws*, vii.
[4] *Cyropædia*, iv. 2.
[5] Justin, Book 14.
[6] Suetonius, in *Vitâ*, c. 60.
[7] "Wherein the Roman does questionless excel."—Livy, ix. 22.

says Livy. And so the first thing they did to prevent the mutinies and insurrections of nations of late conquest was to take from them their arms and horses, and therefore it is that we so often meet in Cæsar—

"Arma proferri, jumenta produci, obsides dari jubet."[1]

The Grand Signior to this day suffers not a Christian or a Jew to keep a horse of his own throughout his empire.

Our ancestors, and especially at the time they had war with the English, in all their greatest engagements and pitched battles fought for the most part on foot, that they might have nothing but their own force, courage, and constancy to trust to in a quarrel of so great concern as life and honour. You stake (whatever Chrysanthes in Xenophon[2] says to the contrary) your valour and your fortune upon that of your horse; his wounds or death bring your person into the same danger; his fear or fury shall make you reputed rash or cowardly; if he have an ill mouth or will not answer to the spur, your honour must answer for it. And, therefore, I do not think it strange that those battles were more firm and furious than those that are fought on horseback:—

"Cædebant pariter, pariterque ruebant
Victores victique; neque his fuga nota, neque illis."[3]

Their battles were much better disputed. Nowadays there are nothing but routs:—

"Primus clamor atque impetus rem decernit."[4]

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[1] "He commanded the arms to be produced, the horses brought out, hostages to be given."—*De Bello Gall.*, vii. 11.

[2] *Cyropædia*, iv. 3.

[3] "They fought and fell pell-mell, victors and vanquished; nor was flight thought of by either."—*Æneid*, x. 756.

[4] "The first shout and charge decides the business."—Livy, xxv. 41.

And the means we choose to make use of in so great a hazard should be as much as possible at our own command: wherefore I should advise to choose weapons of the shortest sort, and such of which we are able to give the best account. A man may repose more confidence in a sword he holds in his hand than in a bullet he discharges out of a pistol, wherein there must be a concurrence of several circumstances to make it perform its office, the powder, the stone, and the wheel: if any of which fail it endangers your fortune. A man himself strikes much surer than the air can direct his blow:—

> "Et, quo ferre velint, permittere vulnera ventis:
> Ensis habet vires; et gens quæcumque virorum est,
> Bella gerit gladiis."[1]

But of that weapon I shall speak more fully when I come to compare the arms of the ancients with those of modern use; only, by the way, the astonishment of the ear abated, which every one grows familiar with in a short time, I look upon it as a weapon of very little execution, and hope we shall one day lay it aside. That missile weapon which the Italians formerly made use of both with fire and by sling was much more terrible: they called a certain kind of javelin, armed at the point with an iron three feet long, that it might pierce through and through an armed man, Phalarica, which they sometimes in the field darted by hand, sometimes from several sorts of engines for the defence of beleaguered places; the shaft being rolled round with flax, wax, rosin, oil, and other combustible matter, took fire in its flight, and lighting upon the body of a man or his target,

[1] "And so where they choose to carry [the arrows], the winds allow the wounds; the sword has strength of arm: and whatever nation of men there is, they wage war with swords."—Lucan, viii. 384.

took away all the use of arms and limbs. And yet, coming to close fight, I should think they would also damage the assailant, and that the camp being as it were planted with these flaming truncheons, would produce a common inconvenience to the whole crowd :—

> "Magnum stridens contorta Phalarica venit,
> Fulminis acta modo."[1]

They had, moreover, other devices which custom made them perfect in (which seem incredible to us who have not seen them), by which they supplied the effects of our powder and shot. They darted their spears with so great force, as ofttimes to transfix two targets and two armed men at once, and pin them together. Neither was the effect of their slings less certain of execution or of shorter carriage :—

"Saxis globosis . . . funda, mare apertum incessentes . . . coronas modici circuli, magno ex intervallo loci, assueti trajicere non capita modo hostium vulnerabant, sed quem locum destinassent."[2]

Their pieces of battery had not only the execution but the thunder of our cannon also :—

"Ad ictus mœnium cum terribili sonitu editos, pavor et trepidatio cepit."[3]

The Gauls, our kinsmen in Asia, abominated these treacherous missile arms, it being their use to fight, with greater bravery, hand to hand :—

[1] "The Phalarica, launched like lightning, flies through the air with a loud rushing sound."—*Æneid*, ix. 705.

[2] "Culling round stones from the beach for their slings ; and with these practising over the waves, so as from a great distance to throw within a very small circuit, they became able not only to wound an enemy in the head, but hit any other part at pleasure."—Livy, xxxviii. 29.

[3] "At the battery of the walls, performed with a terrible noise, the defenders began to fear and tremble."—Idem, *ibid.*, 5.

"Non tam patentibus plagis moventur . . . ubi latior quam altior plaga est, etiam gloriosius se pugnare putant: iidem, quum aculeus sagittæ aut glandis abditæ introrsus tenui vulnere in speciem urit . . . tum in rabiem et pudorem tam parvæ perimentis pestis versi, prosternunt corpora humi."[1]

A pretty description of something very like an arquebuse-shot. The ten thousand Greeks in their long and famous retreat met with a nation who very much galled them with great and strong bows, carrying arrows so long that, taking them up, one might return them back like a dart, and with them pierce a buckler and an armed man through and through.[2] The engines, that Dionysius invented at Syracuse to shoot vast massy darts and stones of a prodigious greatness with so great impetuosity and at so great a distance, came very near to our modern inventions.

But in this discourse of horses and horsemanship, we are not to forget the pleasant posture of one Maistre Pierre Pol, a doctor of divinity, upon his mule, whom Monstrelet reports always to have ridden sideways through the streets of Paris like a woman. He says also, elsewhere, that the Gascons had terrible horses, that would wheel in their full speed, which the French, Picards, Flemings, and Brabanters looked upon as a miracle, "having never seen the like before," which are his very words.

Cæsar,[3] speaking of the Suabians: "in the charges they make on horseback," says he, "they often throw themselves off to fight on foot, having taught their horses not to stir in the meantime from

[1] "They are not so much concerned about large gashes—the bigger and deeper the wound, the more glorious do they esteem the combat: but when they find themselves tormented by some arrow-head or bullet lodged within, but presenting little outward show of wound, transported with shame and anger to perish by so imperceptible a destroyer, they fall to the ground."—Livy, xxxviii. 21.

[2] Xenophon, *Anab.*, v. 2.

[3] *De Bello Gall.*, iv. 1.

the place, to which they presently run again upon occasion; and according to their custom, nothing is so unmanly and so base as to use saddles or pads, and they despise such as make use of those conveniences: insomuch that, being but a very few in number, they fear not to attack a great many." That which I have formerly wondered at, to see a horse made to perform all his airs with a switch only and the reins upon his neck, was common with the Massilians, who rid their horses without saddle or bridle:—

> "Et gens, quæ nudo resīdens Massylia dorso,
> Ora levi flectit, frænorum nescia, virgâ."[1]
>
> "Et Numidæ infræni cingunt."[2]

"Equi sine frænis, deformis ipse cursus, rigidâ cervice et extento capite currentium."[3]

King Alfonso,[4] he who first instituted the Order of the Band or Scarf in Spain, amongst other rules of the order, gave them this, that they should never ride mule or mulet, upon penalty of a mark of silver; this I had lately out of Guevara's *Letters*. Whoever gave these the title of Golden Epistles had another kind of opinion of them than I have. The Courtier[5] says, that till his time it was a disgrace to a gentleman to ride on one of these creatures: but the Abyssinians, on the contrary, the nearer they are to the person of Prester John, love to be mounted upon large mules, for the greatest dignity and grandeur.

[1] "The Massylians, mounted on the bare backs of their horses, bridleless, guide them by a mere switch."—Lucan, iv. 682.

[2] "The Numidians guiding their horses without bridles."—*Æneid*, iv. 41.

[3] "The career of a horse without a bridle is ungraceful; the neck extended stiff, and the nose thrust out."—Livy, xxxv. 11.

[4] Alfonso XI., king of Leon and Castile, died 1350.

[5] The *Cortegiano* of Balthasar Castiglione, published in 1528.

Xenophon tells us,[1] that the Assyrians were fain to keep their horses fettered in the stable, they were so fierce and vicious; and that it required so much time to loose and harness them, that to avoid any disorder this tedious preparation might bring upon them in case of surprise, they never sat down in their camp till it was first well fortified with ditches and ramparts. His Cyrus, who was so great a master in all manner of horse service, kept his horses to their due work, and never suffered them to have anything to eat till first they had earned it by the sweat of some kind of exercise. The Scythians when in the field and in scarcity of provisions used to let their horses' blood, which they drank, and sustained themselves by that diet:—

"Venit et epoto Sarmata pastus equo."[2]

Those of Crete, being besieged by Metellus, were in so great necessity for drink that they were fain to quench their thirst with their horses' urine.[3]

To shew how much cheaper the Turkish armies support themselves than our European forces, 'tis said that besides the soldiers drink nothing but water and eat nothing but rice and salt flesh pulverised (of which every one may easily carry about with him a month's provision), they know how to feed upon the blood of their horses as well as the Muscovite and Tartar, and salt it for their use.

These new-discovered people of the Indies, when the Spaniards first landed amongst them, had so great an opinion both of the men and horses, that they looked upon the first as gods and the other

[1] *Cyropædia*, iii. 3.

[2] "The Scythian comes, who feeds on horse-flesh."—Martial, *De Spectaculis Liber*, Epigr. iii. 4.

[3] Val. Max., vii. 6, ext. 1.

as animals ennobled above their nature; insomuch that after they were subdued, coming to the men to sue for peace and pardon, and to bring them gold and provisions, they failed not to offer of the same to the horses, with the same kind of harangue to them they had made to the others: interpreting their neighing for a language of truce and friendship.

In the other Indies, to ride upon an elephant was the first and royal place of honour; the second to ride in a coach with four horses; the third to ride upon a camel; and the last and least honour to be carried or drawn by one horse only.[1] Some one of our late writers tells us that he has been in countries in those parts where they ride upon oxen with pads, stirrups, and bridles, and very much at their ease.

Quintus Fabius Maximus Rullianus, in a battle with the Samnites, seeing his horse, after three or four charges, had failed of breaking into the enemy's battalion, took this course, to make them unbridle all their horses and spur their hardest, so that having nothing to check their career, they might through weapons and men open the way to his foot, who by that means gave them a bloody defeat.[2] The same command was given by Quintus Fulvius Flaccus against the Celtiberians:—

"Id quum majore vi equorum facietis, si effrænatos in hostes equos immittis; quod sæpe Romanos equites cum laude fecisse sua memoriæ proditum est . . . detractisque frænis, bis ultro citroque cum magna strage hostium, infractis omnibus hastis, transcurrerunt."[3]

[1] Arrian, *Hist. Ind.*, c. 17.

[2] Livy, vii. 30.

[3] "You will do your business with greater advantage of your horses' strength, if you send them unbridled upon the enemy, as it is recorded the Roman horse to their great glory have often done; their bits being taken off, they charged through and again back through the enemy's ranks with great slaughter, breaking down all their spears."—Idem, xl. 40.

The Duke of Muscovy was anciently obliged to pay this reverence to the Tartars, that when they sent an embassy to him he went out to meet them on foot, and presented them with a goblet of mares' milk (a beverage of greatest esteem amongst them), and if, in drinking, a drop fell by chance upon their horse's mane, he was bound to lick it off with his tongue. The army that Bajazet had sent into Russia was overwhelmed with so dreadful a tempest of snow, that to shelter and preserve themselves from the cold, many killed and embowelled their horses, to creep into their bellies and enjoy the benefit of that vital heat. Bajazet, after that furious battle wherein he was overthrown by Tamerlane,[1] was in a hopeful way of securing his own person by the fleetness of an Arabian mare he had under him, had he not been constrained to let her drink her fill at the ford of a river in his way, which rendered her so heavy and indisposed, that he was afterwards easily overtaken by those that pursued him. They say, indeed, that to let a horse stale takes him off his mettle, but as to drinking, I should rather have thought it would refresh him.

Crœsus, marching his army through certain waste lands near Sardis, met with an infinite number of serpents, which the horses devoured with great appetite, and which Herodotus says[2] was a prodigy of ominous portent to his affairs.

We call a horse entire, that has his mane and ears so, and no other will pass muster.[3] The Lacedæmonians, having defeated the Athenians in Sicily, returning triumphant from the victory into

[1] Or rather Tamer Lenc, Timour the Lame.

[2] Book i., c. 78.

[3] Montaigne doubtless wrote correctly; but the expression was, if so, very differently understood in his country from what it is in England.

the city of Syracuse, amongst other insolences, caused all the horses they had taken to be shorn and led in triumph. Alexander fought with a nation called Dahas, whose discipline it was to march two and two together armed on one horse, to the war; and being in fight, one of them alighted, and so they fought on horseback and on foot, one after another by turns.

I do not think that for graceful riding any nation in the world excels the French. A good horseman, according to our way of speaking, seems rather to have respect to the courage of the man than address in riding. Of all that ever I saw, the most knowing in that art, who had the best seat and the best method in breaking horses, was Monsieur de Carnavalet, who served our King Henry II.

I have seen a man ride with both his feet upon the saddle, take off his saddle, and at his return take it up again and replace it, riding all the while full speed; having galloped over a cap, make at it very good shots backwards with his bow; take up anything from the ground, setting one foot on the ground and the other in the stirrup: with twenty other ape's tricks, which he got his living by.

There has been seen in my time at Constantinople two men upon one horse, who, in the height of its speed, would throw themselves off and into the saddle again by turn; and one who bridled and saddled his horse with nothing but his teeth; another who betwixt two horses, one foot upon one saddle and the other upon another, carrying the other man upon his shoulders, would ride full career, the other standing bolt upright upon and making very good shots with his bow; several who would ride full speed with their heels upward, and their heads upon the saddle betwixt several

scimitars, with the points upwards, fixed in the harness. When I was a boy, the prince of Sulmona, riding an unbroken horse at Naples, prone to all sorts of action, held *réaux*[1] under his knees and toes, as if they had been nailed there, to shew the firmness of his seat.

CHAPTER XLIX

OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS

I SHOULD willingly pardon our people for admitting no other pattern or rule of perfection than their own peculiar manners and customs; for 'tis a common vice, not of the vulgar only, but almost of all men, to walk in the beaten road their ancestors have trod before them. I am content, when they see Fabricius or Lælius, that they look upon their countenance and behaviour as barbarous, seeing they are neither clothed nor fashioned according to our mode. But I find fault with their singular indiscretion in suffering themselves to be so blinded and imposed upon by the authority of the present usage as every month to alter their opinion, if custom so require, and that they should so vary their judgment in their own particular concern. When they wore the busk of their doublets up as high as their breasts, they stiffly maintained that they were in their proper place; some years after it was slipped down betwixt their thighs, and then they could laugh at the former fashion as uneasy and intolerable. The fashion now in use makes them absolutely condemn the other two with so

[1] A small coin of Spain, the Two Sicilies, &c.

great resolution and so universal consent, that a man would think there was a certain kind of madness crept in amongst them, that infatuates their understandings to this strange degree. Now, seeing that our change of fashions is so prompt and sudden, that the inventions of all the tailors in the world cannot furnish out new whim-whams enow to feed our vanity withal, there will often be a necessity that the despised forms must again come in vogue, these immediately after fall into the same contempt; and that the same judgment must, in the space of fifteen or twenty years, take up half-a-dozen not only divers but contrary opinions, with an incredible lightness and inconstancy; there is not any of us so discreet, who suffers not himself to be gulled with this contradiction, and both in external and internal sight to be insensibly blinded.

I wish to muster up here some old customs that I have in memory, some of them the same with ours, the others different, to the end that, bearing in mind this continual variation of human things, we may have our judgment more clearly and firmly settled.

The thing in use amongst us of fighting with rapier and cloak was in practice amongst the Romans also:—

"Sinistras sagis involvunt, gladiosque distringunt,"[1]

says Cæsar; and he[2] observes a vicious custom of our nation, that continues yet amongst us, which is to stop passengers we meet upon the road, to compel them to give an account who they are, and

[1] "They wrapt their cloaks upon the left arm, and drew their swords."—*De Bello Civili*, i. 75.

[2] Idem, lib. v.

to take it for an affront and just cause of quarrel if they refuse to do it.

At the Baths, which the ancients made use of every day before they went to dinner, and as frequently as we wash our hands, they at first only bathed their arms and legs[1]; but afterwards, and by a custom that has continued for many ages in most nations of the world, they bathed stark naked in mixed and perfumed water, looking upon it as a great simplicity to bathe in mere water. The most delicate and affected perfumed themselves all over three or four times a day. They often caused their hair to be pinched off, as the women of France have some time since taken up a custom to do their foreheads :—

"Quod pectus, quod crura tibi, quod brachia vellis,"[2]

though they had ointments proper for that purpose :—

"Psilotro nitet, aut acida latet oblita creta."[3]

They delighted to lie soft, and alleged it as a great testimony of hardiness to lie upon a mattress. They ate lying upon beds, much after the manner of the Turks in this age :—

"Inde thoro pater Æneas sic orsus ab alto."[4]

And 'tis said of the younger Cato,[5] that after the battle of Pharsalia, being entered into a melancholy disposition at the ill posture of the public affairs, he took his repasts always sitting, assuming a strict and austere course of life. It was also their custom to

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 86.

[2] "You pluck the hairs out of your breast, your arms, and thighs." —Martial, ii. 62, 1.

[3] "She shines with unguents, or with chalk dissolved in vinegar."— Idem, vi. 93, 9.

[4] "Thus Father Æneas, from his high bed of state, spoke."— *Æneid*, ii. 2.

[5] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 15.

kiss the hands of great persons ; the more to honour and caress them. And meeting with friends, they always kissed in salutation, as do the Venetians :—

"Gratatusque darem cum dulcibus oscula verbis."[1]

In petitioning or saluting any great man, they used to lay their hands upon his knees. Pasicles the philosopher, brother of Crates, instead of laying his hand upon the knee laid it upon the private parts, and being roughly repulsed by him to whom he made that indecent compliment : "What," said he, "is not that part your own as well as the other?"[2] They used to eat fruit, as we do, after dinner.[3] They wiped their fundaments (let the ladies, if they please, mince it smaller) with a sponge, which is the reason that *spongia* is a smutty word in Latin ; which sponge was fastened to the end of a stick, as appears by the story of him who, as he was led along to be thrown to the wild beasts in the sight of the people, asking leave to do his business, and having no other way to despatch himself, forced the sponge and stick down his throat and choked himself.[4] They used to wipe, after coition, with perfumed wool :—

"At tibi nil faciam ; sed lota mentula lana."[5]

They had in the streets of Rome vessels and little tubs for passengers to piss in :—

"Pusi sæpe lacum propter se, ac dolia curta.
Somno devincti, credunt extollere vestem."[6]

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[1] "And pleased I would with sweetest words give kisses."—Ovid, *De Pont.*, iv. 9, 13. I question whether the practice of kissing was so universal at Venice in the time of Montaigne, who was there in 1580.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 89.

[3] Horace, *Sat.* i. 3, 6.

[4] Seneca, *Ep.*, 70.

[5] Martial, xi. 58, 11.

[6] "The little boys in their sleep often think they are near the public urinal, and raise their coats to make use of it."—Lucretius, iv. 1024.

They had collation betwixt meals, and had in summer cellars of snow to cool their wine; and some there were who made use of snow in winter, not thinking their wine cool enough, even at that cold season of the year. The men of quality had their cupbearers and carvers, and their buffoons to make them sport. They had their meat served up in winter upon chafing dishes, which were set upon the table, and had portable kitchens (of which I myself have seen some) wherein all their service was carried about with them:—

> "Has vobis epulas habete, lauti:
> Nos offendimur ambulante cæna."[1]

In summer they had a contrivance to bring fresh and clear rills through their lower rooms, wherein were great store of living fish, which the guests took out with their own hands to be dressed every man according to his own liking. Fish has ever had this pre-eminence, and keeps it still, that the grandees, as to them, all pretend to be cooks; and indeed the taste is more delicate than that of flesh, at least to my fancy. But in all sorts of magnificence, debauchery, and voluptuous inventions of effeminacy and expense, we do, in truth, all we can to parallel them; for our wills are as corrupt as theirs: but we want ability to equal them. Our force is no more able to reach them in their vicious, than in their virtuous, qualities, for both the one and the other proceeded from a vigour of soul which was without comparison greater in them than in us; and souls, by how much the weaker they are, by so much have they less power to do either very well or very ill.

The highest place of honour amongst them was

[1] "Do you, if you please, esteem these feasts: we do not like the ambulatory suppers."—Martial, vii. 48, 4.

the middle. The name going before, or following after, either in writing or speaking, had no signification of grandeur, as is evident by their writings; they will as soon say Oppius and Cæsar, as Cæsar and Oppius; and me and thee, as thee and me. This is the reason that made me formerly take notice in the life of Flaminius, in our French Plutarch,[1] of one passage, where it seems as if the author, speaking of the jealousy of honour betwixt the Ætolians and Romans, about the winning of a battle they had with their joined forces obtained, made it of some importance, that in the Greek songs they had put the Ætolians before the Romans: if there be no amphibology in the words of the French translation.

The ladies, in their baths, made no scruple of admitting men amongst them, and moreover made use of their serving-men to rub and anoint them:—

> "Inguina succinctus nigri tibi servus aluta
> Stat, quoties calidis nuda foveris aquis."[2]

They all powdered themselves with a certain powder, to moderate their sweats.

The ancient Gauls, says Sidonius Apollinaris,[3] wore their hair long before and the hinder part of the head shaved, a fashion that begins to revive in this vicious and effeminate age.

The Romans used to pay the watermen their fare at their first stepping into the boat, which we never do till after landing:—

> "Dum æs exigitur, dum mula ligatur,
> Tota abit hora."[4]

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[1] By Amyot, c. 5.

[2] "A slave—his middle girded with a black apron—stands before you, when, naked, you take a hot bath."—Martial, vii. 35, 1.

[3] *Carm.*, v. 239.

[4] "Whilst the fare's paying, and the mule is being harnessed, a whole hour's time is past."—Horace, *Sat.* i. 5, 13.

The women used to lie on the side of the bed next the wall: and for that reason they called Cæsar,

"Spondam regis Nicomedis,"[1]

They took breath in their drinking, and watered their wine:—

"Quis puer ocius
Restinguet ardentis Falerni
Pocula prætereunte lymphâ?"[2]

And the roguish looks and gestures of our lackeys were also in use amongst them:—

"O Jane, a tergo quem nulla ciconia pinsit,
Nec manus, auriculas imitari est mobilis albas,
Nec linguæ, quantum sitiat canis Appula, tantum."[3]

The Argian and Roman ladies mourned in white,[4] as ours did formerly and should do still, were I to govern in this point. But there are whole books on this subject.

CHAPTER L

OF DEMOCRITUS AND HERACLITUS

THE judgment is an utensil proper for all subjects, and will have an oar in everything: which is the reason, that in these Essays I take hold of all occasions where, though it happen to be a subject I do not very well understand, I try, however,

[1] "The bed of King Nicomedes."—Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*, 49.

[2] "What boy will quickly come and cool the heat of the Falernian wine with clear water?"—Horace, *Od.*, ii. 2, 18.

[3] "O Janus, whom no crooked fingers, simulating a stork, peck at behind your back, whom no quick hands deride behind you, by imitating the motion of the white ears of the ass, against whom no mocking tongue is thrust out, as the tongue of the thirsty Apulian dog."—Persius, i. 58.

[4] Herodian, iv. 2, 6. The Chinese used yellow, and the French, in Montaigne's own day, purple.

sounding it at a distance, and finding it too deep for my stature, I keep me on the shore; and this knowledge that a man can proceed no further, is one effect of its virtue, yea, one of those of which it is most proud.[1] One while in an idle and frivolous subject, I try to find out matter whereof to compose a body, and then to prop and support it; another while, I employ it in a noble subject, one that has been tossed and tumbled by a thousand hands, wherein a man can scarce possibly introduce anything of his own, the way being so beaten on every side that he must of necessity walk in the steps of another: in such a case, 'tis the work of the judgment to take the way that seems best, and of a thousand paths, to determine that this or that is the best. I leave the choice of my arguments to fortune, and take that she first presents to me; they are all alike to me, I never design to go through any of them; for I never see all of anything: neither do they who so largely promise to show it others. Of a hundred members and faces that everything has, I take one, onewhile to look it over only, another while to ripple up the skin, and sometimes to pinch it to the bones: I give a stab, not so wide but as deep as I can, and am for the most part tempted to take it in hand by some new light I discover in it. Did I know myself less, I might perhaps venture to handle something or other to the bottom, and to be deceived in my own inability; but sprinkling here one word and there another, patterns cut from several pieces and scattered without design and without engaging myself too far, I am not responsible for them, or obliged to keep close to

[1] Which Cotton translates, "even in the most inconsidering sort of men"; the text being, "ouy, de ceux dont il se vante le plus." Florio has it: "Yea, of such, whereof he vanteth most."

my subject, without varying at my own liberty and pleasure, and giving up myself to doubt and uncertainty, and to my own governing method, ignorance.

All motion discovers us: the very same soul of Cæsar, that made itself so conspicuous in marshalling and commanding the battle of Pharsalia, was also seen as solicitous and busy in the softer affairs of love and leisure. A man makes a judgment of a horse, not only by seeing him when he is showing off his paces, but by his very walk, nay, and by seeing him stand in the stable.

Amongst the functions of the soul, there are some of a lower and meaner form; he who does not see her in those inferior offices as well as in those of nobler note, never fully discovers her; and, peradventure, she is best shown where she moves her simpler pace. The winds of passions take most hold of her in her highest flights; and the rather by reason that she wholly applies herself to, and exercises her whole virtue upon, every particular subject, and never handles more than one thing at a time, and that not according to it, but according to herself. Things in respect to themselves have, peradventure, their weight, measures, and conditions; but when we once take them into us, the soul forms them as she pleases. Death is terrible to Cicero, coveted by Cato, indifferent to Socrates. Health, conscience, authority, knowledge, riches, beauty, and their contraries, all strip themselves at their entering into us, and receive a new robe, and of another fashion, from the soul; and of what colour, brown, bright, green, dark, and of what quality, sharp, sweet, deep, or superficial, as best pleases each of them, for they are not agreed upon any common standard of forms, rules, or proceedings; every one

is a queen in her own dominions. Let us, therefore, no more excuse ourselves upon the external qualities of things; it belongs to us to give ourselves an account of them. Our good or ill has no other dependence but on ourselves. 'Tis there that our offerings and our vows are due, and not to fortune: she has no power over our manners; on the contrary, they draw and make her follow in their train, and cast her in their own mould. Why should not I judge of Alexander at table, ranting and drinking at the prodigious rate he sometimes used to do? Or, if he played at chess? what string of his soul was not touched by this idle and childish game? I hate and avoid it, because it is not play enough, that it is too grave and serious a diversion, and I am ashamed to lay out as much thought and study upon it as would serve to much better uses. He did not more pump his brains about his glorious expedition into the Indies, nor than another in unravelling a passage upon which depends the safety of mankind. To what a degree does this ridiculous diversion molest the soul, when all her faculties are summoned together upon this trivial account! and how fair an opportunity she herein gives every one to know and to make a right judgment of himself? I do not more thoroughly sift myself in any other posture than this: what passion are we exempted from in it? Anger, spite, malice, impatience, and a vehement desire of getting the better in a concern wherein it were more excusable to be ambitious of being overcome; for to be eminent, to excel above the common rate in frivolous things, nowise befits a man of honour. What I say in this example may be said in all others. Every particle, every employment of man manifests him equally with any other.

Democritus and Heraclitus were two philosophers, of whom the first, finding human condition ridiculous and vain, never appeared abroad but with a jeering and laughing countenance; whereas Heraclitus commiserating that same condition of ours, appeared always with a sorrowful look, and tears in his eyes:—

> "Alter
> Ridebat, quoties a limine moverat unum
> Protuleratque pedem; flebat contrarius alter."[1]

I am clearly for the first humour; not because it is more pleasant to laugh than to weep, but because it expresses more contempt and condemnation than the other, and I think we can never be despised according to our full desert. Compassion and bewailing seem to imply some esteem of and value for the thing bemoaned; whereas the things we laugh at are by that expressed to be of no moment. I do not think that we are so unhappy as we are vain, or have in us so much malice as folly; we are not so full of mischief as inanity; nor so miserable as we are vile and mean. And therefore Diogenes, who passed away his time in rolling himself in his tub, and made nothing of the great Alexander, esteeming us no better than flies or bladders puffed up with wind, was a sharper and more penetrating, and, consequently in my opinion, a juster judge than Timon, surnamed the Man-hater; for what a man hates he lays to heart. This last was an enemy to all mankind, who passionately desired our ruin, and avoided our conversation as dangerous, proceeding from wicked and depraved natures: the other valued us so little that we could neither trouble nor infect him by our example; and

[1] "The one always, as often as he had stepped one pace from his threshold, laughed, the other always wept."—Juvenal, *Sat.*, x. 28.

left us to herd one with another, not out of fear, but from contempt of our society: concluding us as incapable of doing good as evil.

Of the same strain was Statilius' answer, when Brutus courted him into the conspiracy against Cæsar; he was satisfied that the enterprise was just, but he did not think mankind worthy of a wise man's concern[1]; according to the doctrine of Hegesias, who said, that a wise man ought to do nothing but for himself, forasmuch as he only was worthy of it[2]: and to the saying of Theodorus, that it was not reasonable a wise man should hazard himself for his country, and endanger wisdom for a company of fools.[3] Our condition is as ridiculous as capable of laughter.

CHAPTER LI

OF THE VANITY OF WORDS

A rhetorician of times past said, that to make little things appear great was his profession. This was a shoemaker, who can make a great shoe for a little foot.[4] They would in Sparta have sent such a fellow to be whipped for making profession of a tricky and deceitful act; and I fancy that Archidamus, who was king of that country, was a little surprised at the answer of Thucydides, when inquiring of him, which was the better wrestler, Pericles, or he, he replied, that it was hard to affirm; for when I have thrown him, said he, he always persuades the spectators that he had no fall and carries away the

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*, c. 3.
[2] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 95.
[3] Idem, *ibid.*
[4] A saying of Agesilaus.

prize.[1] The women who paint, pounce, and plaster up their ruins, filling up their wrinkles and deformities, are less to blame, because it is no great matter whether we see them in their natural complexions; whereas these make it their business to deceive not our sight only but our judgments, and to adulterate and corrupt the very essence of things. The republics that have maintained themselves in a regular and well-modelled government, such as those of Lacedæmon and Crete, had orators in no very great esteem. Aristo wisely defined rhetoric to be "a science to persuade the people"[2]; Socrates and Plato "an art to flatter and deceive."[3] And those who deny it in the general description, verify it throughout in their precepts. The Mohammedans will not suffer their children to be instructed in it, as being useless, and the Athenians, perceiving of how pernicious consequence the practice of it was, it being in their city of universal esteem, ordered the principal part, which is to move the affections, with their exordiums and perorations, to be taken away. 'Tis an engine invented to manage and govern a disorderly and tumultuous rabble, and that never is made use of, but like physic to the sick, in a discomposed state. In those where the vulgar or the ignorant, or both together, have been all-powerful and able to give the law, as in those of Athens, Rhodes, and Rome, and where the public affairs have been in a continual tempest of commotion, to such places have the orators always repaired. And in truth, we shall find few persons in those republics who have pushed their fortunes to any great degree of eminence without the assistance of eloquence.

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*, c. 5.
[2] Quintilian, ii. 15.
[3] In the *Gorgias*.

Pompey, Cæsar, Crassus, Lucullus, Lentulus, Metellus, thence took their chiefest spring, to mount to that degree of authority at which they at last arrived, making it of greater use to them than arms, contrary to the opinion of better times; for, L. Volumnius speaking publicly in favour of the election of Q. Fabius and Pub. Decius, to the consular dignity: "These are men," said he, "born for war and great in execution; in the combat of the tongue altogether wanting; spirits truly consular. The subtle, eloquent, and learned are only good for the city, to make prætors of, to administer justice."[1] Eloquence most flourished at Rome when the public affairs were in the worst condition and most disquieted with intestine commotions; as a free and untilled soil bears the worst weeds. By which it should seem that a monarchical government has less need of it than any other: for the stupidity and facility natural to the common people, and that render them subject to be turned and twined and led by the ears by this charming harmony of words, without weighing or considering the truth and reality of things by the force of reason: this facility, I say, is not easily found in a single person, and it is also more easy by good education and advice to secure him from the impression of this poison. There was never any famous orator known to come out of Persia or Macedon.

I have entered into this discourse upon the occasion of an Italian I lately received into my service, and who was clerk of the kitchen to the late Cardinal Caraffa till his death. I put this fellow upon an account of his office: when he fell to discourse of this palate-science, with such a settled countenance and magisterial gravity, as

[1] Livy, x. 22.

if he had been handling some profound point of divinity. He made a learned distinction of the several sorts of appetites; of that a man has before he begins to eat, and of those after the second and third service; the means simply to satisfy the first, and then to raise and actuate the other two; the ordering of the sauces, first in general, and then proceeded to the qualities of the ingredients and their effects; the differences of salads according to their seasons, those which ought to be served up hot, and which cold; the manner of their garnishment and decoration to render them acceptable to the eye. After which he entered upon the order of the whole service, full of weighty and important considerations:—

> "Nec minimo sane discrimine refert,
> Quo gestu lepores, et quo gallina secetur"[1];

and all this set out with lofty and magnificent words, the very same we make use of when we discourse of the government of an empire. Which learned lecture of my man brought this of Terence into my memory:—

> "Hoc salsum 'st, hoc adustum 'st, hoc lautum 'st, parum:
> Illud recte: iterum sic memento: sedulo
> Moneo, quæ possum, pro mea sapientiâ.
> Postremo, tanquam in speculum, in patinas, Demea,
> Inspicere jubeo, et moneo, quid facto usus sit."[2]

And yet even the Greeks themselves very much admired and highly applauded the order and disposition

[1] "Nor with the least discrimination relates how we should carve hares, and how cut up a hen."—Juvenal, *Sat.*, v. 123. The two operations were, and are, so different.

[2] "This is salt, that's burnt, that's not washed enough; that's well; remember to do so another time. Thus do I ever advise them to have things done properly, according to my capacity; and lastly, Demea, I command my cooks to look into every dish as if it were a mirror, and tell them what they should do."—Terence, *Adelph.*, iii. 3, 71.

that Paulus Æmilius observed in the feast he gave them at his return from Macedon.[1] But I do not here speak of effects, I speak of words only.

I do not know whether it may have the same operation upon other men that it has upon me, but when I hear our architects thunder out their bombast words of pilasters, architraves, and cornices, of the Corinthian and Doric orders, and suchlike jargon, my imagination is presently possessed with the palace of Apollidon[2]; when, after all, I find them but the paltry pieces of my own kitchen door.

To hear men talk of metonomies, metaphors, and allegories, and other grammar words, would not one think they signified some rare and exotic form of speaking? And yet they are phrases that come near to the babble of my chambermaid.

And this other is a gullery of the same stamp, to call the offices of our kingdom by the lofty titles of the Romans, though they have no similitude of function, and still less of authority and power. And this also, which I doubt will one day turn to the reproach of this age of ours, unworthily and indifferently to confer upon any we think fit the most glorious surnames with which antiquity honoured but one or two persons in several ages. Plato carried away the surname of Divine, by so universal a consent that never any one repined at it, or attempted to take it from him; and yet the Italians, who pretend, and with good reason, to more sprightly wits and sounder sense than the other nations of their time, have lately bestowed the same title upon Aretin, in whose writings, save tumid phrases set out with smart periods, ingenious indeed but far-fetched and fantastic, and the

[1] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 15.
[2] A necromancer who figures in *Amadis of Gaul*.

eloquence, be it what it may, I see nothing in him above the ordinary writers of his time, so far is he from approaching the ancient divinity. And we make nothing of giving the surname of great to princes who have nothing more than ordinary in them.

CHAPTER LII

OF THE PARSIMONY[1] OF THE ANCIENTS

ATTILIUS REGULUS, general of the Roman army in Africa, in the height of all his glory and victories over the Carthaginians, wrote to the Republic to acquaint them that a certain hind he had left in trust with his estate, which was in all but seven acres of land, had run away with all his instruments of husbandry, and entreating therefore, that they would please to call him home that he might take order in his own affairs, lest his wife and children should suffer by this disaster. Whereupon the Senate appointed another to manage his business, caused his losses to be made good, and ordered his family to be maintained at the public expense.[2]

The elder Cato,[3] returning consul from Spain, sold his war-horse to save the money it would have cost in bringing it back by sea into Italy; and being Governor of Sardinia, he made all his visits on foot, without other train than one officer of the Republic who carried his robe and a censer for sacrifices, and for the most part carried his trunk himself. He bragged that he had never worn

[1] Montaigne might have better said Frugality; and besides he wrote without a due consideration of the relative value of money.

[2] Val. Max., iv. 4, 6.

[3] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 3.

a gown that cost above ten crowns, nor had ever sent above tenpence to the market for one day's provision; and that as to his country houses, he had not one that was rough-cast on the outside.

Scipio Æmilianus,[1] after two triumphs and two consulships, went an embassy with no more than seven servants in his train. 'Tis said that Homer had never more than one, Plato three, and Zeno, founder of the sect of Stoics, none at all.[2] Tiberius Gracchus was allowed but fivepence halfpenny a day when employed as public minister about the public affairs, and being at that time the greatest man of Rome.[3]

CHAPTER LIII

OF A SAYING OF CÆSAR

If we would sometimes bestow a little consideration upon ourselves, and employ the time we spend in prying into other men's actions, and discovering things without us, in examining our own abilities we should soon perceive of how infirm and decaying material this fabric of ours is composed. Is it not a singular testimony of imperfection that we cannot establish our satisfaction in any one thing, and that even our own fancy and desire should deprive us of the power to choose what is most proper and useful for us? A very good proof of this is the great dispute that has ever been amongst the philosophers, of finding out man's sovereign good, that continues

[1] Val. Max., iv. 3, 13.
[2] Seneca, *Consolat. ad Helv.*, c. 12.
[3] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 4.

yet, and will eternally continue, without solution or accord :—

> "Dum abest quod avemus, id exsuperare videtur
> Cætera ; post aliud, quum contigit illud, avemus,
> Et sitis æqua tenet." [1]

Whatever it is that falls into our knowledge and possession, we find that it satisfies not, and we still pant after things to come and unknown, inasmuch as those present do not suffice for us ; not that, in my judgment, they have not in them wherewith to do it, but because we seize them with an unruly and immoderate haste :—

> "Nam quum vidit hic, ad victum quæ flagitat usus,
> Et per quæ possent vitam consistere tutam,
> Omnia jam ferme mortalibus esse parata ;
> Divitiis homines, et honore, et laude potentes
> Affluere, atque bonâ natorum excellere famâ ;
> Nec minus esse domi cuiquam tamen anxia cordi,
> Atque animi ingratis vitam vexare querelis :
> Causam, quæ infestis cogit sævire querelis,
> Intellegit ibi ; vitium vas efficere ipsum,
> Omniaque, illius vitio, corrumpier intus,
> Quæ collata foris et commoda quomque venirent." [2]

Our appetite is irresolute and fickle ; it can neither keep nor enjoy anything with a good grace : and man concluding it to be the fault of the things he is possessed of, fills himself with and feeds upon the idea of things he neither knows nor understands, to

[1] "While that which we desire is wanting, it seems to surpass all the rest ; then, when we have got it, we want something else ; 'tis ever the same thirst."—Lucretius, iii. 1095.

[2] "For when he saw that almost all things necessarily required for subsistence, and which may render life comfortable, are already prepared to their hand, that men may abundantly attain wealth, honour, praise, may rejoice in the reputation of their children, yet that, notwithstanding, every one has none the less in his heart and home anxieties and a mind enslaved by wearing complaints, he saw that the vessel itself was in fault, and that all good things which were brought into it from without were spoilt by its own imperfections."—Lucretius, vi. 9.

which he devotes his hopes and his desires, paying them all reverence and honour, according to the saying of Cæsar :—

"Communi fit vitio naturæ, ut invisis, latitantibus atque incognitis rebus magis confidamas, vehementiusque exterreamur."[1]

CHAPTER LIV

OF VAIN SUBTLETIES

There are a sort of little knacks and frivolous subtleties from which men sometimes expect to derive reputation and applause: as poets, who compose whole poems with every line beginning with the same letter; we see the shapes of eggs, globes, wings, and hatchets cut out by the ancient Greeks by the measure of their verses, making them longer or shorter, to represent such or such a figure. Of this nature was his employment who made it his business to compute into how many several orders the letters of the alphabet might be transposed, and found out that incredible number mentioned in Plutarch. I am mightily pleased with the humour of him,[2] who having a man brought before him that had learned to throw a grain of millet with such dexterity and assurance as never to

[1] "'Tis the common vice of nature, that we at once repose most confidence, and receive the greatest apprehensions, from things unseen, concealed, and unknown."—*De Bello Civili*, xi. 4.

[2] "Alexander, as may be seen in Quintil., *Institut. Orat.*, lib. ii., cap. 20, where he defines Ματαιοτεχνία 'to be a certain unnecessary imitation of art, which really does neither good nor harm, but is as unprofitable and ridiculous as was the labour of that man who had so perfectly learned to cast small peas through the eye of a needle at a good distance that he never missed one, and was justly rewarded for it, as is said, by Alexander, who saw the performance, with a bushel of peas.'"—Coste.

miss the eye of a needle; and being afterwards entreated to give something for the reward of so rare a performance, he pleasantly, and in my opinion justly, ordered a certain number of bushels of the same grain to be delivered to him, that he might not want wherewith to exercise so famous an art. 'Tis a strong evidence of a weak judgment when men approve of things for their being rare and new, or for their difficulty, where worth and usefulness are not conjoined to recommend them.

I come just now from playing with my own family at who could find out the most things that hold by their two extremities; as *Sire*, which is a title given to the greatest person in the nation, the king, and also to the vulgar, as merchants, but never to any degree of men between. The women of great quality are called *Dames*, inferior gentlewomen, *Demoiselles*, and the meanest sort of women, *Dames*, as the first. The cloth of state over our tables is not permitted but in the palaces of princes and in taverns. Democritus said,[1] that gods and beasts had sharper sense than men, who are of a middle form. The Romans wore the same habit at funerals and feasts. It is most certain that an extreme fear and an extreme ardour of courage equally trouble and relax the belly. The nickname of *Trembling* with which they surnamed Sancho XII., king of Navarre, tells us that valour will cause a trembling in the limbs as well as fear. Those who were arming that king, or some other person, who upon the like occasion was wont to be in the same disorder, tried to compose him by representing the danger less he was going to engage himself in: "You understand me ill," said

[1] Plutarch, *De Placit. Philosoph.*, iv. 10.

he, "for could my flesh know the danger my courage will presently carry it into, it would sink down to the ground." The faintness that surprises us from frigidity or dislike in the exercises of Venus are also occasioned by a too violent desire and an immoderate heat. Extreme coldness and extreme heat boil and roast. Aristotle says, that sows of lead will melt and run with cold and the rigour of winter just as with a vehement heat. Desire and satiety fill all the gradations above and below pleasure with pain. Stupidity and wisdom meet in the same centre of sentiment and resolution, in the suffering of human accidents. The wise control and triumph over ill, the others know it not: these last are, as a man may say, on this side of accidents, the others are beyond them, who after having well weighed and considered their qualities, measured and judged them what they are, by virtue of a vigorous soul leap out of their reach; they disdain and trample them underfoot, having a solid and well-fortified soul, against which the darts of fortune, coming to strike, must of necessity rebound and blunt themselves, meeting with a body upon which they can fix no impression; the ordinary and middle condition of men are lodged betwixt these two extremities, consisting of such as perceive evils, feel them, and are not able to support them. Infancy and decrepitude meet in the imbecility of the brain; avarice and profusion in the same thirst and desire of getting.

A man may say with some colour of truth that there is an Abecedarian ignorance that precedes knowledge, and a doctoral ignorance that comes after it: an ignorance that knowledge creates and begets, at the same time that it despatches and destroys the first. Of mean understandings, little

inquisitive, and little instructed, are made good Christians, who by reverence and obedience simply believe and are constant in their belief. In the average understandings and the middle sort of capacities, the error of opinion is begotten; they follow the appearance of the first impression, and have some colour of reason on their side to impute our walking on in the old beaten path to simplicity and stupidity, meaning us who have not informed ourselves by study. The higher and nobler souls, more solid and clear-sighted, make up another sort of true believers, who by a long and religious investigation of truth, have obtained a clearer and more penetrating light into the Scriptures, and have discovered the mysterious and divine secret of our ecclesiastical polity; and yet we see some, who by the middle step, have arrived at that supreme degree with marvellous fruit and confirmation, as to the utmost limit of Christian intelligence, and enjoy their victory with great spiritual consolation, humble acknowledgment of the divine favour, reformation of manners, and singular modesty. I do not intend with these to rank those others, who to clear themselves from all suspicion of their former errors and to satisfy us that they are sound and firm, render themselves extremely indiscreet and unjust, in the carrying on our cause, and blemish it with infinite reproaches of violence and oppression. The simple peasants are good people, and so are the philosophers, or whatever the present age calls them, men of strong and clear reason, and whose souls are enriched with an ample instruction of profitable sciences. The mongrels who have disdained the first form of the ignorance of letters, and have not been able to attain to the other (sitting betwixt two stools, as I and a great

many more of us do), are dangerous, foolish, and importunate; these are they that trouble the world. And therefore it is that I, for my own part, retreat as much as I can towards the first and natural station, whence I so vainly attempted to advance.

Popular and purely natural poesy[1] has in it certain artless graces, by which she may come into comparison with the greatest beauty of poetry perfected by art: as we see in our Gascon villanels and the songs that are brought us from nations that have no knowledge of any manner of science, nor so much as the use of writing. The middle sort of poesy betwixt these two is despised, of no value, honour, or esteem.

But seeing that the path once laid open to the fancy, I have found, as it commonly falls out, that what we have taken for a difficult exercise and a rare subject, prove to be nothing so, and that after the invention is once warm, it finds out an infinite number of parallel examples. I shall only add this one—that, were these Essays of mine considerable enough to deserve a critical judgment, it might then, I think, fall out that they would not much take with common and vulgar capacities, nor be very acceptable to the singular and excellent sort of men; the first would not understand them enough, and the last too much; and so they may hover in the middle region.

[1] "The term *poesie populaire* was employed, for the first time, in the French language on this occasion. Montaigne created the expression, and indicated its nature."—*Ampère.*

CHAPTER LV

OF PERFUMES

IT has been reported of some, as of Alexander the Great, that their sweat exhaled an odoriferous smell, occasioned by some rare and extraordinary constitution, of which Plutarch and others have been inquisitive into the cause. But the ordinary constitution of human bodies is quite otherwise, and their best and chiefest excellency is to be exempt from smell. Nay, the sweetness even of the purest breath has nothing in it of greater perfection than to be without any offensive smell, like those of healthful children, which made Plautus say of a woman :—

"Ecastor mulier recte olet, ubi nihil olet."[1]

And such as make use of fine exotic perfumes are with good reason to be suspected of some natural imperfection which they endeavour by these odours to conceal. To smell, though well, is to stink :—

"Rides nos, Coracine, nil olentes:
Malo, quam bene olere, nil olere."[2]

And elsewhere :—

"Posthume, non bene olet, qui bene semper olet."[3]

I am nevertheless a great lover of good smells, and as much abominate the ill ones, which also

[1] "By Castor! the woman smells well, where she smells of nothing."—Plautus, *Mostel*, i. 3, 116.

[2] "You laugh at us, Coracinus, because we are not scented; I would, rather than smell well, not smell at all."—Martial, vi. 55, 4.

[3] "Posthumus, he who ever smells well does not smell well."—Idem, ii. 12, 14.

I scent at a greater distance, I think, than other men :—

> "Namque sagacius unus odoror,
> Polypus, an gravis hirsutis cubet hircus in alis
> Quam canis acer, ubi lateat sus."[1]

Of smells, the simple and natural seem to me the most pleasing. Let the ladies look to that, for 'tis chiefly their concern : amid the most profound barbarism,[2] the Scythian women, after bathing, were wont to powder and crust their faces and all their bodies with a certain odoriferous drug growing in their country, which being cleansed off, when they came to have familiarity with men they were found perfumed and sleek. 'Tis not to be believed how strangely all sorts of odours cleave to me, and how apt my skin is to imbibe them. He that complains of nature that she has not furnished mankind with a vehicle to convey smells to the nose had no reason ; for they will do it themselves, especially to me ; my very mustachios, which are full, perform that office ; for if I stroke them but with my gloves or handkerchief, the smell will not out a whole day ; they manifest where I have been, and the close, luscious, devouring, viscid melting kisses of youthful ardour in my wanton age left a sweetness upon my lips for several hours after. And yet I have ever found myself little subject to epidemic diseases, that are caught, either by conversing with the sick or bred by the contagion of the air, and have escaped from those of my time, of which there have been several sorts in our cities and armies. We read of Socrates,[3] that though he

[1] "My nose is quicker to scent a fetid sore or a rank armpit, than a dog to smell out the hidden sow."—Horace, *Epod.*, xii. 4.

[2] "En la plus espesse barbarie," which Cotton singularly converts into "the wildest parts of Barbary," and Coste follows him thither.

[3] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 25.

never departed from Athens during the frequent plagues that infested the city, he only was never infected.

Physicians might, I believe, extract greater utility from odours than they do, for I have often observed that they cause an alteration in me and work upon my spirits according to their several virtues; which makes me approve of what is said, that the use of incense and perfumes in churches, so ancient and so universally received in all nations and religions, was intended to cheer us, and to rouse and purify the senses, the better to fit us for contemplation.

I could have been glad, the better to judge of it, to have tasted the culinary art of those cooks who had so rare a way of seasoning exotic odours with the relish of meats; as it was particularly observed in the service of the king of Tunis, who in our days[1] landed at Naples to have an interview with Charles the Emperor. His dishes were larded with odoriferous drugs, to that degree of expense that the cookery of one peacock and two pheasants amounted to a hundred ducats to dress them after their fashion; and when the carver came to cut them up, not only the dining-room, but all the apartments of his palace and the adjoining streets were filled with an aromatic vapour which did not presently vanish.

My chiefest care in choosing my lodgings is always to avoid a thick and stinking air; and those beautiful cities, Venice and Paris, very much lessen the kindness I have for them, the one by the offensive smell of her marshes, and the other of her dirt.

[1] Muley-Hassam, in 1543.

CHAPTER LVI

OF PRAYERS

I propose formless and undetermined fancies, like those who publish doubtful questions, to be after disputed upon in the schools, not to establish truth but to seek it; and I submit them to the judgments of those whose office it is to regulate, not my writings and actions only, but moreover my very thoughts. Let what I here set down meet with correction or applause, it shall be of equal welcome and utility to me, myself beforehand condemning as absurd and impious, if anything shall be found, through ignorance or inadvertency, couched in this rhapsody, contrary to the holy resolutions and prescriptions of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, into which I was born and in which I will die. And yet, always submitting to the authority of their censure, which has an absolute power over me, I thus rashly venture at everything, as in treating upon this present subject.

I know not if or no I am wrong, but since, by a particular favour of the divine bounty, a certain form of prayer has been prescribed and dictated to us, word by word, from the mouth of God Himself, I have ever been of opinion that we ought to have it in more frequent use than we yet have; and if I were worthy to advise, at the sitting down to and rising from our tables, at our rising from and going to bed, and in every particular action wherein prayer is used, I would that Christians always make use of the Lord's Prayer, if not alone, yet at least always. The Church may lengthen and diversify prayers, according to the necessity of our

instruction, for I know very well that it is always the same in substance and the same thing: but yet such a privilege ought to be given to that prayer, that the people should have it continually in their mouths; for it is most certain that all necessary petitions are comprehended in it, and that it is infinitely proper for all occasions. 'Tis the only prayer I use in all places and conditions, and which I still repeat instead of changing; whence it also happens that I have no other so entirely by heart as that.

It just now came into my mind, whence it is we should derive that error of having recourse to God in all our designs and enterprises, to call Him to our assistance in all sorts of affairs, and in all places where our weakness stands in need of support, without considering whether the occasion be just or otherwise; and to invoke His name and power, in what state soever we are, or action we are engaged in, howsoever vicious. He is indeed, our sole and unique protector, and can do all things for us: but though He is pleased to honour us with this sweet paternal alliance, He is, notwithstanding, as just as He is good and mighty; and more often exercises His justice than His power, and favours us according to that, and not according to our petitions.

Plato in his Laws,[1] makes three sorts of belief injurious to the gods; "that there are none; that they concern not themselves about our affairs; that they never refuse anything to our vows, offerings, and sacrifices." The first of these errors (according to his opinion), never continued rooted in any man from his infancy to his old age; the other two, he confesses, men might be obstinate in.

[1] Book x. at the beginning.

God's justice and His power are inseparable; 'tis in vain we invoke His power in an unjust cause. We are to have our souls pure and clean, at that moment at least wherein we pray to Him, and purified from all vicious passions; otherwise we ourselves present Him the rods wherewith to chastise us; instead of repairing anything we have done amiss, we double the wickedness and the offence when we offer to Him, to whom we are to sue for pardon, an affection full of irreverence and hatred. Which makes me not very apt to applaud those whom I observe to be so frequent on their knees, if the actions nearest to the prayer do not give me some evidence of amendment and reformation :—

> "Si, nocturnus adulter,
> Tempora Santonico velas adoperta cucullo."[1]

And the practice of a man who mixes devotion with an execrable life seems in some sort more to be condemned than that of a man conformable to his own propension and dissolute throughout; and for that reason it is that our Church denies admittance to and communion with men obstinate and incorrigible in any notorious wickedness. We pray only by custom and for fashion's sake; or rather, we read or pronounce our prayers aloud, which is no better than an hypocritical show of devotion; and I am scandalised to see a man cross himself thrice at the Benedicite, and as often at Grace (and the more, because it is a sign I have in great veneration and continual use, even when I yawn[2]), and to

[1] "If a night adulterer, thou coverest thy head with a Santonic cowl."—Juvenal, *Sat.*, viii. 144. The Santones were the people who inhabited Saintonge in France, from whom the Romans derived the use of hoods or cowls covering the head and face.

[2] "Mesmement quand je baaille," which Cotton renders, "upon solemn occasions."

dedicate all the other hours of the day to acts of malice, avarice, and injustice. One hour to God, the rest to the devil, as if by composition and compensation. 'Tis a wonder to see actions so various in themselves succeed one another with such an uniformity of method as not to interfere nor suffer any alteration, even upon the very confines and passes from the one to the other. What a prodigious conscience must that be that can be at quiet within itself whilst it harbours under the same roof, with so agreeing and so calm a society, both the crime and the judge?

A man whose whole meditation is continually working upon nothing but impurity which he knows to be so odious to Almighty God, what can he say when he comes to speak to Him? He draws back, but immediately falls into a relapse. If the object of divine justice and the presence of his Maker did, as he pretends, strike and chastise his soul, how short soever the repentance might be, the very fear of offending the Infinite Majesty would so often present itself to his imagination that he would soon see himself master of those vices that are most natural and vehement in him. But what shall we say of those who settle their whole course of life upon the profit and emolument of sins, which they know to be mortal? How many trades and vocations have we admitted and countenanced amongst us, whose very essence is vicious? And he that, confessing himself to me, voluntarily told me that he had all his lifetime professed and practised a religion, in his opinion damnable and contrary to that he had in his heart, only to preserve his credit and the honour of his employments, how could his courage suffer so infamous a confession? What can men say to the divine justice upon this subject?

Their repentance consisting in a visible and manifest reparation, they lose the colour of alleging it both to God and man. Are they so impudent as to sue for remission without satisfaction and without penitence? I look upon these as in the same condition with the first: but the obstinacy is not there so easy to be overcome. This contrariety and volubility of opinion so sudden, so violent, that they feign, are a kind of miracle to me: they present us with the state of an indigestible agony of mind.

It seemed to me a fantastic imagination in those who, these late years past, were wont to reproach every man they knew to be of any extraordinary parts, and made profession of the Catholic religion, that it was but outwardly; maintaining, moreover, to do him honour forsooth, that whatever he might pretend to the contrary he could not but in his heart be of their reformed opinion. An untoward disease, that a man should be so riveted to his own belief as to fancy that others cannot believe otherwise than as he does; and yet worse, that they should entertain so vicious an opinion of such great parts as to think any man so qualified, should prefer any present advantage of fortune to the promises of eternal life and the menaces of eternal damnation. They may believe me: could anything have tempted my youth, the ambition of the danger and difficulties in the late commotions had not been the least motives.

It is not without very good reason, in my opinion, that the Church interdicts the promiscuous, indiscreet, and irreverent use of the holy and divine Psalms, with which the Holy Ghost inspired King David. We ought not to mix God in our actions, but with the highest reverence and caution; that

poesy is too holy to be put to no other use than to exercise the lungs and to delight our ears; it ought to come from the conscience, and not from the tongue. It is not fit that a prentice in his shop, amongst his vain and frivolous thoughts, should be permitted to pass away his time and divert himself with such sacred things. Neither is it decent to see the Holy Book of the holy mysteries of our belief tumbled up and down a hall or a kitchen: they were formerly mysteries, but are now become sports and recreations. 'Tis a book too serious and too venerable to be cursorily or slightly turned over: the reading of the scripture ought to be a temperate and premeditated act, and to which men should always add this devout preface, *sursum corda*, preparing even the body to so humble and composed a gesture and countenance as shall evidence a particular veneration and attention. Neither is it a book for every one to fist, but the study of select men set apart for that purpose, and whom Almighty God has been pleased to call to that office and sacred function: the wicked and ignorant grow worse by it. 'Tis not a story to tell, but a history to revere, fear, and adore. Are not they then pleasant men who think they have rendered this fit for the people's handling by translating it into the vulgar tongue? Does the understanding of all therein contained only stick at words? Shall I venture to say further, that by coming so near to understand a little, they are much wider of the whole scope than before. A pure and simple ignorance and wholly depending upon the exposition of qualified persons, was far more learned and salutary than this vain and verbal knowledge, which has only proved the nurse of temerity and presumption.

And I do further believe that the liberty every one has taken to disperse the sacred writ into so many idioms carries with it a great deal more of danger than utility. The Jews, Mohammedans, and almost all other peoples, have reverentially espoused the language wherein their mysteries were first conceived, and have expressly, and not without colour of reason, forbidden the alteration of them into any other. Are we assured that in Biscay and in Brittany there are enough competent judges of this affair to establish this translation into their own language? The universal Church has not a more difficult and solemn judgment to make. In preaching and speaking the interpretation is vague, free, mutable, and of a piece by itself; so 'tis not the same thing.

One of our Greek historians justly censures the age he lived in, because the secrets of the Christian religion were dispersed into the hands of every mechanic, to expound and argue upon, according to his own fancy, and that we ought to be much ashamed, we who by God's especial favour enjoy the pure mysteries of piety, to suffer them to be profaned by the ignorant rabble; considering that the Gentiles expressly forbad Socrates, Plato, and the other sages to inquire into or so much as to mention the things committed to the priests of Delphi; and he says, moreover, that the factions of princes upon theological subjects are armed not with zeal but fury; that zeal springs from the divine wisdom and justice, and governs itself with prudence and moderation, but degenerates into hatred and envy, producing tares and nettles instead of corn and wine when conducted by human passions. And it was truly said by another, who, advising the Emperor Theodosius, told him that

disputes did not so much rock the schisms of the Church asleep, as it roused and animated heresies; that, therefore, all contentions and dialectic disputations were to be avoided, and men absolutely to acquiesce in the prescriptions and formulas of faith established by the ancients. And the Emperor Andronicus having overheard[1] some great men at high words in his palace with Lapodius about a point of ours of great importance, gave them so severe a check as to threaten to cause them to be thrown into the river if they did not desist. The very women and children nowadays take upon them to lecture the oldest and most experienced men about the ecclesiastical laws; whereas the first of those of Plato[2] forbids them to inquire so much as into the civil laws, which were to stand instead of divine ordinances; and, allowing the old men to confer amongst themselves or with the magistrate about those things, he adds, provided it be not in the presence of young or profane persons.

A bishop[3] has left in writing that at the other end of the world there is an isle, by the ancients called Dioscorides,[4] abundantly fertile in all sorts of trees and fruits, and of an exceedingly healthful air; the inhabitants of which are Christians, having churches and altars, only adorned with crosses without any other images, great observers of fasts and feasts, exact payers of their tithes to the priests, and so chaste, that none of them is permitted to have to do with more than one woman in his life[5];

[1] Andronicos Comnenos. Nicetas, ii. 4, who, however, mentions no Lapodius.

[2] *Laws*, Book i.

[3] Osorius, Bishop of Silves, author of *De Rebus Gestis Emmanuelis regis Lusitaniæ*.

[4] Now Socotra.

[5] What Osorius says is that these people only had one wife at a time.

as to the rest, so content with their condition, that environed with the sea they know nothing of navigation, and so simple that they understand not one syllable of the religion they profess and wherein they are so devout: a thing incredible to such as do not know that the Pagans, who are so zealous idolaters, know nothing more of their gods than their bare names and their statues. The ancient beginning of *Menalippus*, a tragedy of Euripides, ran thus:—

> "O Jupiter! for that name alone
> Of what thou art to me is known."[1]

I have also known in my time some men's writings found fault with for being purely human and philosophical, without any mixture of theology; and yet, with some show of reason, it might, on the contrary, be said that the divine doctrine, as queen and regent of the rest, better keeps her state apart, that she ought to be sovereign throughout, not subsidiary and suffragan, and that, peradventure, grammatical, rhetorical, logical examples may elsewhere be more suitably chosen, as also the material for the stage, games, and public entertainments, than from so sacred a matter; that divine reasons are considered with greater veneration and attention by themselves, and in their own proper style, than when mixed with and adapted to human discourse; that it is a fault much more often observed that the divines write too humanly, than that the humanists write not theologically enough. Philosophy, says St. Chrysostom, has long been banished the holy schools, as an handmaid altogether useless and thought unworthy to look, so much as in passing

[1] Plutarch, *Treatise on Love*, c. 12.

by the door, into the sanctuary of the holy treasures of the celestial doctrine; that the human way of speaking is of a much lower form and ought not to adopt for herself the dignity and majesty of divine eloquence. Let who will *verbis indisciplinatis*[1] talk of fortune, destiny, accident, good and evil hap, and other suchlike phrases, according to his own humour; I for my part propose fancies merely human and merely my own, and that simply as human fancies, and separately considered, not as determined by any decree from heaven, incapable of doubt or dispute; matter of opinion, not matter of faith; things which I discourse of according to my own notions, not as I believe, according to God; after a laical, not clerical, and yet always after a very religious manner, as children prepare their exercises, not to instruct but to be instructed.

And might it not be said, that an edict enjoining all people but such as are public professors of divinity, to be very reserved in writing of religion, would carry with it a very good colour of utility and justice—and to me, amongst the rest peradventure, to hold my prating? I have been told that even those who are not of our Church nevertheless amongst themselves expressly forbid the name of God to be used in common discourse, not so much even by way of interjection, exclamation, assertion of a truth, or comparison; and I think them in the right: upon what occasion soever we call upon God to accompany and assist us, it ought always to be done with the greatest reverence and devotion.

There is, as I remember, a passage in Xenophon where he tells us that we ought so much the more seldom to call upon God, by how much it is hard to

[1] "In undisciplined language."—St. Augustin, *De Civit Dei*, x. 29.

compose our souls to such a degree of calmness, patience, and devotion as it ought to be in at such a time; otherwise our prayers are not only vain and fruitless, but vicious: "forgive us," we say, "our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"; what do we mean by this petition but that we present to God a soul free from all rancour and revenge? And yet we make nothing of invoking God's assistance in our vices, and inviting Him into our unjust designs:

"Quæ, nisi seductis, nequeas committere divis"[1];

the covetous man prays for the conservation of his vain and superfluous riches; the ambitious for victory and the good conduct of his fortune; the thief calls Him to his assistance, to deliver him from the dangers and difficulties that obstruct his wicked designs, or returns Him thanks for the facility he has met with in cutting a man's throat; at the door of the house men are going to storm or break into by force of a petard, they fall to prayers for success, their intentions and hopes of cruelty, avarice, and lust:—

"Hoc igitur, quo tu Jovis aurem impellere tentas,
Dic agedum Staio: 'proh Jupiter! O bone,' clamet,
'Jupiter!' At sese non clamet Jupiter ipse.
Ignovisse pietas?"[2]

Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, tells[3] of a young prince, who, though she does not name him, is easily enough by his great qualities to be known,

[1] "Which you can only impart to the gods, when you have gained them over."—Persius, ii. 4.

[2] "This therefore, with which you seek to draw the ear of Jupiter, say to Staius. 'O Jupiter! O good Jupiter!' let him cry. Think you Jupiter himself would not cry out upon it?"—Persius, ii. 21.

[3] In the *Heptameron*.

who going upon an amorous assignation to lie with an advocate's wife of Paris, his way thither being through a church, he never passed that holy place going to or returning from his pious exercise, but he always kneeled down to pray. Wherein he would employ the divine favour, his soul being full of such virtuous meditations, I leave others to judge, which, nevertheless, she instances for a testimony of singular devotion. But this is not the only proof we have that women are not very fit to treat of theological affairs.[1]

A true prayer and religious reconciling of ourselves to Almighty God cannot enter into an impure soul, subject at the very time to the dominion of Satan. He who calls God to his assistance whilst in a course of vice, does as if a cut-purse should call a magistrate to help him, or like those who introduce the name of God to the attestation of a lie :—

> "Tacito mala vota susurro
> Concipimus."[2]

There are few men who durst publish to the world the prayers they make to Almighty God :—

> "Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque, humilesque susurros
> Tollere de templis, et aperto vivere voto"[3];

and this is the reason why the Pythagoreans would have them always public and heard by every one, to the end they might not prefer indecent or unjust petitions as this man :—

[1] Which Cotton translates: "It is by this proof only that a man may conclude no man," &c.

[2] "We whisper our bad wishes."—Lucan, v. 104.

[3] "'Tis not convenient for every one to bring the prayers he mutters out of the temple, and to give his wishes to the public ear."—Persius, ii. 6.

"Clare quum dixit, Apollo!
Labra movet, metuens audiri: Pulcra Laverna,
Da mihi fallere, da justum sanctumque videri;
Noctem peccatis, et fraudibus objice nubem."[1]

The gods severely punished the wicked prayers of Œdipus in granting them: he had prayed that his children might amongst themselves determine the succession to his throne by arms, and was so miserable as to see himself taken at his word. We are not to pray that all things may go as we would have them, but as most concurrent with prudence.

We seem, in truth, to make use of our prayers as of a kind of jargon, and as those do who employ holy words about sorceries and magical operations; and as if we reckoned the benefit we are to reap from them as depending upon the contexture, sound, and jingle of words, or upon the grave composing of the countenance. For having the soul contaminated with concupiscence, not touched with repentance, or comforted by any late reconciliation with God, we go to present Him such words as the memory suggests to the tongue, and hope from thence to obtain the remission of our sins. There is nothing so easy, so sweet, and so favourable, as the divine law: it calls and invites us to her, guilty and abominable as we are; extends her arms and receives us into her bosom, foul and polluted as we at present are, and are for the future to be. But then, in return, we are to look upon her with a respectful eye; we are to receive this pardon with all gratitude and submission, and for that instant at least, wherein we address ourselves to her, to have

[1] "When he has clearly said *Apollo!* he moves his lips, fearful to be heard; he murmurs: O fair Laverna, grant me the talent to deceive; grant me to appear holy and just; shroud my sins with night, and cast a cloud over my frauds."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 16, 59. Laverna was the goddess of thieves.

the soul sensible of the ills we have committed, and at enmity with those passions that seduced us to offend her; neither the gods nor good men (says Plato[1]) will accept the present of a wicked man:—

> "Immunis aram si tetigit manus,
> Non sumptuosa blandior hostia
> Mollivit aversos Penates
> Farre pio et saliente micâ."[2]

CHAPTER LVII

OF AGE

I CANNOT allow of the way in which we settle for ourselves the duration of our life. I see that the sages contract it very much in comparison of the common opinion: "what," said the younger Cato to those who would stay his hand from killing himself, "am I now of an age to be reproached that I go out of the world too soon?" And yet he was but eight-and-forty years old.[3] He thought that to be a mature and advanced age, considering how few arrive unto it. And such as, soothing their thoughts with I know not what course of nature, promise to themselves some years beyond it, could they be privileged from the infinite number of accidents to which we are by a natural subjection exposed, they might have some reason so to do. What an idle conceit is it to expect to die of a decay of strength, which is the effect of extremest age, and to propose to ourselves no shorter lease of

[1] *Laws*, iv.

[2] "If a pure hand has touched the altar, the pious offering of a small cake and a few grains of salt will appease the offended gods more effectually than costly sacrifices."—Horace, *Od.*, iii. 23, 17.

[3] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 20.

life than that, considering it is a kind of death of all others the most rare and very seldom seen? We call that only a natural death; as if it were contrary to nature to see a man break his neck with a fall, be drowned in shipwreck, be snatched away with a pleurisy or the plague, and as if our ordinary condition did not expose us to these inconveniences. Let us no longer flatter ourselves with these fine words; we ought rather, peradventure, to call that natural which is general, common, and universal.

To die of old age is a death rare, extraordinary, and singular, and, therefore, so much less natural than the others; 'tis the last and extremest sort of dying: and the more remote, the less to be hoped for. It is, indeed, the bourn beyond which we are not to pass, and which the law of nature has set as a limit, not to be exceeded; but it is, withal, a privilege she is rarely seen to give us to last till then. 'Tis a lease she only signs by particular favour, and it may be to one only in the space of two or three ages, and then with a pass to boot, to carry him through all the traverses and difficulties she has strewed in the way of this long career. And therefore my opinion is, that when once forty years we should consider it as an age to which very few arrive. For seeing that men do not usually proceed so far, it is a sign that we are pretty well advanced; and since we have exceeded the ordinary bounds, which is the just measure of life, we ought not to expect to go much further; having escaped so many precipices of death, whereinto we have seen so many other men fall, we should acknowledge that so extraordinary a fortune as that which has hitherto rescued us from those eminent perils, and kept us alive beyond the ordinary term of living, is not like to continue long.

'Tis a fault in our very laws to maintain this error: these say that a man is not capable of managing his own estate till he be five-and-twenty years old, whereas he will have much ado to manage his life so long. Augustus cut off five years from the ancient Roman standard,[1] and declared that thirty years old was sufficient for a judge. Servius Tullius superseded the knights of above seven-and-forty years of age from the fatigues of war[2]; Augustus dismissed them at forty-five; though methinks it seems a little unreasonable that men should be sent to the fireside till five-and-fifty or sixty years of age. I should be of opinion that our vocation and employment should be as far as possible extended for the public good: I find the fault on the other side, that they do not employ us early enough. This emperor was arbiter of the whole world at nineteen, and yet would have a man to be thirty before he could be fit to determine a dispute about a gutter.

For my part, I believe our souls are adult at twenty as much as they are ever like to be, and as capable then as ever. A soul that has not by that time given evident earnest of its force and virtue will never after come to proof. The natural qualities and virtues produce what they have of vigorous and fine, within that term or never:—

> "Si l'espine non picque quand nai,
> A pene que picque jamai,"[3]

as they say in Dauphiné.

Of all the great human actions I ever heard or

[1] Suetonius, in *Vitâ*, c. 12.

[2] Aulus Gellius, x. 28.

[3] "If the thorn does not prick at its birth, 'twill hardly ever prick at all." This is exactly the early English saying: "Early sharp, that will be thorn."—Hazlitt's Proverbs, 1882, p. 124.

read of, of what sort soever, I have observed, both in former ages and our own, more were performed before the age of thirty than after; and this oft-times in the very lives of the same men.[1] May I not confidently instance in those of Hannibal and his great rival Scipio? The better half of their lives they lived upon the glory they had acquired in their youth; great men after, 'tis true, in comparison of others; but by no means in comparison of themselves. As to my own particular, I do certainly believe that since that age, both my understanding and my constitution have rather decayed than improved, and retired rather than advanced. 'Tis possible, that with those who make the best use of their time, knowledge and experience may increase with their years; but vivacity, promptitude, steadiness, and other pieces of us, of much greater importance, and much more essentially our own, languish and decay:—

> "Ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi
> Corpus, et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,
> Claudicat ingenium, delirat linguaque, mensque."[2]

Sometimes the body first submits to age, sometimes the mind; and I have seen enough who have got a weakness in their brains before either in their legs or stomach; and by how much the more it is a disease of no great pain to the sufferer, and of obscure symptoms, so much greater is the danger.

[1] This criticism is very applicable to a man, who was not really a Frenchman, but who conferred greater glory on France than any Frenchman before or since—Napoleon I. The foundations of his wonderful fortune were laid before he had passed his thirtieth year, and he was of the same opinion as the Essayist as to the superior capability of earlier manhood for great achievements.

[2] "When once the body is shaken by the violence of time, blood and vigour ebbing away, the judgment halts, the tongue and the mind dote."—Lucretius, iii. 452.

For this reason it is that I complain of our laws, not that they keep us too long to our work, but that they set us to work too late. For the frailty of life considered, and to how many ordinary and natural rocks it is exposed, one ought not to give up so large a portion of it to childhood, idleness, and apprenticeship.[1]

[1] Which Cotton thus renders: "Birth though noble, ought not to share so large a vacancy, and so tedious a course of education." Florio (1613) makes the passage read as follows: "Methinks that, considering the weakness of our life, and seeing the infinite number of ordinary rocks and naturall dangers it is subject unto, we should not, so soon as we come into the world, allot so large a share thereof unto unprofitable wantonness in youth, ill-breeding idleness, and slow-learning prentisage."

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

BOOK THE SECOND

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BOOK THE SECOND

CHAPTER I

OF THE INCONSTANCY OF OUR ACTIONS

Such as make it their business to oversee human actions, do not find themselves in anything so much perplexed as to reconcile them and bring them into the world's eye with the same lustre and reputation; for they commonly so strangely contradict one another that it seems impossible they should proceed from one and the same person. We find the younger Marius one while a son of Mars and another a son of Venus. Pope Boniface VIII. entered, it is said, into his Papacy like a fox, behaved himself in it like a lion, and died like a dog; and who could believe it to be the same Nero, the perfect image of all cruelty, who, having the sentence of a condemned man brought to him to sign, as was the custom, cried out, "O that I had never been taught to write!"[1] so much it went to his heart to condemn a man to death. All story is full of such examples, and every man is able to produce so many to himself, or out of his own practice or observation, that I sometimes wonder to see men of understanding give themselves the trouble of sorting these pieces,

[1] Seneca, *De Clementiâ*, ii. 1.

considering that irresolution appears to me to be the most common and manifest vice of our nature: witness the famous verse of the player Publius:—

"Malum consilium est, quod mutari non potest."[1]

There seems some reason in forming a judgment of a man from the most usual methods of his life; but, considering the natural instability of our manners and opinions, I have often thought even the best authors a little out in so obstinately endeavouring to make of us any constant and solid contexture; they choose a general air of a man, and according to that interpret all his actions, of which, if they cannot bend some to a uniformity with the rest, they are presently imputed to dissimulation. Augustus has escaped them, for there was in him so apparent, sudden, and continual variety of actions all the whole course of his life, that he has slipped away clear and undecided from the most daring critics. I can more hardly believe a man's constancy than any other virtue, and believe nothing sooner than the contrary. He that would judge of a man in detail and distinctly, bit by bit, would oftener be able to speak the truth. It is a hard matter, from all antiquity, to pick out a dozen men who have formed their lives to one certain and constant course, which is the principal design of wisdom; for to comprise it all in one word, says one of the ancients,[2] and to contract all the rules of human life into one, "it is to will, and not to will, always one and the same thing: I will not vouchsafe," says he, "to add, provided the will be just, for if it be not just,

[1] "'Tis evil counsel that will admit no change."—Pub. Mim., ex Aul. Gell., xvii. 14.

[2] Seneca, *Ep.*, 20.

it is impossible it should be always one." I have indeed formerly learned that vice is nothing but irregularity and want of measure, and therefore 'tis impossible to fix constancy to it. 'Tis a saying of Demosthenes, "that the beginning of all virtue is consultation and deliberation; the end and perfection, constancy." If we would resolve on any certain course by reason, we should pitch upon the best, but nobody has thought on't:—

> "Quod petiit, spernit; repetit, quod nuper omisit;
> Æstuat, et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto."[1]

Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, be it to the left or right, upwards or downwards, according as we are wafted by the breath of occasion. We never meditate what we would have till the instant we have a mind to have it; and change like that little creature which receives its colour from what it is laid upon. What we but just now proposed to ourselves we immediately alter, and presently return again to it; 'tis nothing but shifting and inconsistency:—

> "Ducimur, ut nervis alienis mobile lignum."[2]

We do not go, we are driven; like things that float, now leisurely, then with violence, according to the gentleness or rapidity of the current:—

> "Nonne videmus,
> Quid sibi quisque velit, nescire, et quærere semper
> Commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit?"[3]

[1] "That which he sought he despises; what he lately lost, he seeks again. He fluctuates, and is inconsistent in the whole order of life."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 1, 98.

[2] "We are turned about like the top with the thong of others."—Idem, *Sat.*, ii. 7, 82.

[3] "Do we not see them, uncertain what they want, and always asking for something new, as if they could get rid of the burthen."—Lucretius, iii. 1070.

Every day a new whimsy, and our humours keep motion with the time.

> "Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse
> Juppiter auctificas lustravit lumine terras." [1]

We fluctuate betwixt various inclinations; we will nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly.[2] In any one who had prescribed and established determinate laws and rules in his head for his own conduct, we should perceive an equality of manners, an order and an infallible relation of one thing or action to another, shine through his whole life; Empedocles observed this discrepancy in the Agrigentines, that they gave themselves up to delights, as if every day was their last, and built as if they had been to live for ever.[3] The judgment would not be hard to make, as is very evident in the younger Cato; he who therein has found one step, it will lead him to all the rest; 'tis a harmony of very according sounds, that cannot jar. But with us 'tis quite contrary; every particular action requires a particular judgment. The surest way to steer, in my opinion, would be to take our measures from the nearest allied circumstances, without engaging in a longer inquisition, or without concluding any other consequence. I was told, during the civil disorders of our poor kingdom, that a maid, hard by the place where I then was, had thrown herself out of a window to avoid being forced by a common soldier who was quartered in the house; she was not killed by the fall, and therefore, repeating

[1] "Such are the minds of men, that they change as the light with which father Jupiter himself has illumined the increasing earth."—Cicero, *Frag. Poet*, lib. x.

[2] Seneca, *Ep.*, 52.

[3] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Empedocles*, i. 8.

her attempt would have cut her own throat, had she not been prevented; but having, nevertheless, wounded herself to some show of danger, she voluntarily confessed that the soldier had not as yet importuned her otherwise than by courtship, earnest solicitation, and presents; but that she was afraid that in the end he would have proceeded to violence, all which she delivered with such a countenance and accent, and withal embrued in her own blood, the highest testimony of her virtue, that she appeared another Lucretia; and yet I have since been very well assured that both before and after she was not so difficult a piece. And, according to my host's tale in Ariosto, be as handsome a man and as worthy a gentleman as you will, do not conclude too much upon your mistress's inviolable chastity for having been repulsed; you do not know but she may have a better stomach to your muleteer.

Antigonus, having taken one of his soldiers into a great degree of favour and esteem for his valour, gave his physicians strict charge to cure him of a long and inward disease under which he had a great while languished, and observing that, after his cure, he went much more coldly to work than before, he asked him what had so altered and cowed him: "Yourself, sir," replied the other, "by having eased me of the pains that made me weary of my life."[1] Lucullus's soldier having been rifled by the enemy, performed upon them in revenge a brave exploit, by which having made himself a gainer, Lucullus, who had conceived a good opinion of him from that action, went about to engage him in some enterprise of very great danger, with all

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Pelopidas*, c. 1.

the plausible persuasions and promises he could think of;

"Verbis, quæ timido quoque possent addere mentem"[1]:

"Pray employ," answered he, "some miserable plundered soldier in that affair":—

"Quantumvis rusticus, ibit,
Ibit eo, quo vis, qui zonam perdidit, inquit"[2];

and flatly refused to go. When we read that Mahomet having furiously rated Chasan, Bassa of the Janissaries, because he had seen the Hungarians break into his squadrons, and himself behave very ill in the business, and that Chasan, instead of any other answer, rushed furiously alone, scimitar in hand, into the first body of the enemy, where he was presently cut to pieces, we are not to look upon that action, peradventure, so much as vindication as a turn of mind, not so much natural valour as a sudden despite. The man you saw yesterday so adventurous and brave, you must not think it strange to see him as great a poltroon the next: anger, necessity, company, wine, or the sound of the trumpet had roused his spirits; this is no valour formed and established by reason, but accidentally created by such circumstances, and therefore it is no wonder if by contrary circumstances it appear quite another thing.

These supple variations and contradictions so manifest in us, have given occasion to some to believe that man has two souls; other two distinct powers that always accompany and incline us, the one towards good and the other towards ill, according

[1] "Words which might add courage to any timid man."—Horace, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 1, 2.

[2] "Some poor fellow, who has lost his purse, will go whither you wish, said he."—Horace, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 39.

to their own nature and propension; so abrupt a variety not being imaginable to flow from one and the same source.

For my part, the puff of every accident not only carries me along with it according to its own proclivity, but moreover I discompose and trouble myself by the instability of my own posture; and whoever will look narrowly into his own bosom, will hardly find himself twice in the same condition. I give to my soul sometimes one face and sometimes another, according to the side I turn her to. If I speak variously of myself, it is because I consider myself variously; all the contrarieties are there to be found in one corner or another; after one fashion or another: bashful, insolent; chaste, lustful; prating, silent; laborious, delicate; ingenious, heavy; melancholic, pleasant; lying, true; knowing, ignorant; liberal, covetous, and prodigal: I find all this in myself, more or less, according as I turn myself about; and whoever will sift himself to the bottom, will find in himself, and even in his own judgment, this volubility and discordance. I have nothing to say of myself entirely, simply, and solidly without mixture and confusion. *Distinguo* is the most universal member of my logic. Though I always intend to speak well of good things, and rather to interpret such things as fall out in the best sense than otherwise, yet such is the strangeness of our condition, that we are often pushed on to do well even by vice itself, if well-doing were not judged by the intention only. One gallant action, therefore, ought not to conclude a man valiant; if a man were brave indeed, he would be always so, and upon all occasions. If it were a habit of valour and not a sally, it would render a man equally resolute in all accidents; the same alone as in

company; the same in lists as in a battle: for, let them say what they will, there is not one valour for the pavement and another for the field; he would bear a sickness in his bed as bravely as a wound in the field, and no more fear death in his own house than at an assault. We should not then see the same man charge into a breach with a brave assurance, and afterwards torment himself like a woman for the loss of a trial at law or the death of a child; when, being an infamous coward, he is firm in the necessities of poverty; when he shrinks at the sight of a barber's razor, and rushes fearless upon the swords of the enemy, the action is commendable, not the man.

Many of the Greeks, says Cicero,[1] cannot endure the sight of an enemy, and yet are courageous in sickness; the Cimbrians and Celtiberians quite contrary—

"Nihil enim potest esse æquabile, quod non a certâ ratione proficiscatur."[2]

No valour can be more extreme in its kind than that of Alexander: but it is of but one kind, nor full enough throughout, nor universal. Incomparable as it is, it has yet some blemishes; of which his being so often at his wits' end upon every light suspicion of his captains conspiring against his life, and the carrying himself in that inquisition with so much vehemence and indiscreet injustice, and with a fear that subverted his natural reason, is one pregnant instance. The superstition, also, with which he was so much tainted, carries along with it some image of pusillanimity; and the excess of his penitence for the murder of Clytus is also a

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 27.

[2] "Nothing can be regular that does not proceed from a fixed ground of reason."—Idem, *ibid.*, c. 26.

testimony of the unevenness of his courage. All we perform is no other than a cento, as a man may say, of several pieces, and we would acquire honour by a false title. Virtue cannot be followed but for herself, and if one sometimes borrows her mask to some other purpose, she presently pulls it away again. 'Tis a vivid and strong tincture which, when the soul has once thoroughly imbibed it, will not out but with the piece. And, therefore, to make a right judgment of a man, we are long and very observingly to follow his trace: if constancy does not there stand firm upon her own proper base—

"Cui vivendi via considerata atque provisa est,"[1]

if the variety of occurrences makes him alter his pace (his path, I mean, for the pace may be faster or slower) let him go; such an one runs before the wind, "Avau le vent," as the motto of our Talbot[2] has it.

'Tis no wonder, says one of the ancients, that chance has so great a dominion over us, since it is by chance we live. It is not possible for any one who has not designed his life for some certain end, to dispose his particular actions; it is impossible for any one to arrange the pieces, who has not the whole form already contrived in his imagination. Of what use are colours to him that knows not what he is to paint? No one lays down a certain design for his life, and we only deliberate thereof by pieces. The archer ought first to know at what he is to aim, and then accommodate his arm, bow, string, shaft, and motion to it; our counsels deviate

[1] "If the way of his life is thoroughly considered and traced out." —Cicero, *Paradox*, v. 1.

[2] The French family of that name, the equivalent of our *Taillebois* or *Cutwode*.

and wander, because not levelled to any determinate end. No wind serves him who addresses his voyage to no certain port. I cannot acquiesce in the judgment given by one in the behalf of Sophocles,[1] who concluded him capable of the management of domestic affairs, against the accusation of his son, from having read one of his tragedies.

Neither do I allow of the conjecture of the Parians,[2] sent to regulate the Milesians, sufficient for such a consequence, as they from thence derived: coming to visit the island, they took notice of such grounds as were best husbanded, and such country-houses as were best governed; and having taken the names of the owners, when they had assembled the citizens, they appointed these farmers for new governors and magistrates; concluding that they, who had been so provident in their own private concerns, would be so of the public too. We are all lumps, and of so various and inform a contexture, that every piece plays, every moment, its own game, and there is as much difference betwixt us and ourselves as betwixt us and others:—

"Magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere."[3]

Since ambition can teach man valour, temperance, and liberality, and even justice too; seeing that avarice can inspire the courage of a shop-boy, bred and nursed up in obscurity and ease, with the assurance to expose himself so far from the fireside to the mercy of the waves and angry Neptune in a frail boat; that she further teaches discretion and prudence; and that even Venus can inflate boys under the discipline of the rod with boldness

[1] Cicero, *De Senect*, c. 7. [2] Herodotus, lib. v.
[3] "Esteem it a great thing always to act as one and the same man."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 120.

and resolution, and infuse masculine courage into the heart of tender virgins in their mothers' arms :—

> "Hac duce, custodes furtim transgressa jacentes,
> Ad juvenem tenebris sola puella venit"[1]:

'tis not all the understanding has to do, simply to judge us by our outward actions; it must penetrate the very soul, and there discover by what springs the motion is guided. But that being a high and hazardous undertaking, I could wish that fewer would attempt it.

CHAPTER II

OF DRUNKENNESS

THE world is nothing but variety and difference: vices are all alike, as they are vices, and peradventure the Stoics understand them so; but although they are equally vices, yet they are not all equal vices; and he who has transgressed the ordinary bounds a hundred paces :—

> "Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum,"[2]

should not be in a worse condition than he that has advanced but ten, is not to be believed; or that sacrilege is not worse than stealing a cabbage :—

> "Nec vincet ratio hoc, tantumdem ut peccet, idemque,
> Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,
> Et qui nocturnus divum sacra legerit."[3]

There is in this as great diversity as in anything whatever. The confounding of the order and

[1] "She leading, the maiden, furtively passing by the recumbent guards, goes alone in the darkness to the youth."—Tibullus, ii. 1, 75.

[2] "Beyond or within which the right cannot exist."—Horace, *Sat.*, i. 1, 107.

[3] Idem, *ibid.*, iii. 1, 115. The sense is given in the preceding passage of the text.

measure of sins is dangerous: murderers, traitors, and tyrants get too much by it, and it is not reasonable they should flatter their consciences, because another man is idle, lascivious, or not assiduous at his devotion. Every one overrates the offence of his companions, but extenuates his own. Our very instructors themselves rank them sometimes, in my opinion, very ill. As Socrates said that the principal office of wisdom was to distinguish good from evil, we, the best of whom are vicious, ought also to say the same of the science of distinguishing betwixt vice and vice, without which, and that very exactly performed, the virtuous and the wicked will remain confounded and unrecognised.

Now, amongst the rest, drunkenness seems to me to be a gross and brutish vice. The soul has greater part in the rest, and there are some vices that have something, if a man may so say, of generous in them; there are vices wherein there is a mixture of knowledge, diligence, valour, prudence, dexterity, and address; this one is totally corporeal and earthly. And the rudest nation this day in Europe is that alone where it is in fashion. Other vices discompose the understanding: this totally overthrows it and renders the body stupid:—

> "Cum vini vis penetravit . . .
> Consequitur gravitas membrorum, præpediuntur
> Crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,
> Nant oculi; clamor, singultus, jurgia, gliscunt."[1]

The worst state of man is that wherein he loses the knowledge and government of himself. And

[1] "When the power of wine has penetrated us, a heaviness of the limbs follows, the legs of the tottering person are impeded; the tongue grows torpid, the mind is dimmed, the eyes swim; noise, hiccup, and quarrels arise."—Lucretius, i. 3, 475.

'tis said amongst other things upon this subject, that, as the must fermenting in a vessel, works up to the top whatever it has in the bottom, so wine, in those who have drunk beyond measure, vents the most inward secrets :—

"Tu sapientūm
Curas et arcanum jocoso
Consilium retegis Lyæo."[1]

Josephus tells us that by giving an ambassador the enemy had sent to him his full dose of liquor, he wormed out his secrets. And yet, Augustus, committing the most inward secrets of his affairs to Lucius Piso, who conquered Thrace, never found him faulty in the least, no more than Tiberius did Cossus, with whom he intrusted his whole counsels, though we know they were both so given to drink that they have often been fain to carry both the one and the other drunk out of the Senate :—

"Hesterno inflatum venas ut semper, Iaccho."[2]

And the design of killing Cæsar was as safely communicated to Cimber, though he would often be drunk, as to Cassius, who drank nothing but water.[3] We see our Germans, when drunk as the devil, know their post, remember the word, and keep to their ranks :—

"Nec facilis victoria de madidis, et
Blæsis, atque mero titubantibus."[4]

I could not have believed there had been so profound, senseless, and dead a degree of drunkenness

[1] "Thou disclosest to the merry Lyæus the cares and secret counsel of the wise."—Horace, *Od.*, iii. 21. Lyæus, a name given to Bacchus.

[2] "Their veins full, as usual, of yesterday's Bacchus."—Virgil, *Ecl.*, vi. 15.

[3] As to which Cassius pleasantly said: "What, shall I bear a tyrant, I who cannot bear wine?"

[4] "Nor is a victory easily obtained over men so drunk, they can scarce speak or stand."—Juvenal, *Sat.*, xv. 47.

had I not read in history that Attalus, having, to put a notable affront upon him, invited to supper the same Pausanias, who upon the very same occasion afterwards killed Philip of Macedon, a king who by his excellent qualities gave sufficient testimony of his education in the house and company of Epaminondas, made him drink to such a pitch that he could after abandon his beauty, as of a hedge strumpet, to the muleteers and servants of the basest office in the house. And I have been further told by a lady whom I highly honour and esteem, that near Bordeaux and about Castres[1] where she lives, a country woman, a widow of chaste repute, perceiving in herself the first symptoms of breeding, innocently told her neighbours that if she had a husband she should think herself with child; but the causes of suspicion every day more and more increasing, and at last growing up to a manifest proof, the poor woman was reduced to the necessity of causing it to be proclaimed in her parish church, that whoever had done that deed and would frankly confess it, she did not only promise to forgive, but moreover to marry him, if he liked the motion; whereupon a young fellow that served her in the quality of a labourer, encouraged by this proclamation, declared that he had one holiday found her, having taken too much of the bottle, so fast asleep by the chimney and in so indecent a posture, that he could conveniently do his business without waking her; and they yet live together man and wife.

It is true that antiquity has not much decried this vice; the writings even of several philosophers speak very tenderly of it, and even amongst the Stoics there are some who advise folks to give

[1] The place of this name thirteen miles from Bordeaux.

themselves sometimes the liberty to drink, nay, to drunkenness, to refresh the soul :—

> " Hoc quoque virtutum quondam certamine, magnum
> Socratem palmam promeruisse ferunt." [1]

That censor and reprover of others, Cato, was reproached that he was a hard drinker :—

> " Narratur et prisci Catonis
> Sæpe mero caluisse virtus." [2]

Cyrus, that so renowned king, amongst the other qualities by which he claimed to be preferred before his brother Artaxerxes, urged this excellence, that he could drink a great deal more than he. And in the best governed nations this trial of skill in drinking is very much in use. I have heard Silvius, an excellent physician of Paris, say that lest the digestive faculties of the stomach should grow idle, it were not amiss once a month to rouse them by this excess, and to spur them lest they should grow dull and rusty ; and one author tells us that the Persians used to consult about their most important affairs after being well warmed with wine.

My taste and constitution are greater enemies to this vice than my discourse ; for besides that I easily submit my belief to the authority of ancient opinions, I look upon it indeed as an unmanly and stupid vice, but less malicious and hurtful than the others, which, almost all, more directly jostle public society. And if we cannot please ourselves but it must cost us something, as they hold, I find this vice costs a man's conscience less than the others, besides that it is of no difficult preparation, nor hard to be found,

[1] " In this trial of power formerly they relate that the great Socrates deserved the palm."—Cornel. Gallus, *Ep.*, i. 47.

[2] " And of old Cato it is said, that his courage was often warmed with wine." - Horace, *Od.*, xxi. 3, 11. Cato the Elder.

a consideration not altogether to be despised. A man well advanced both in dignity and age, amongst three principal commodities that he said remained to him of life, reckoned to me this for one, and where would a man more justly find it than amongst the natural conveniences? But he did not take it right, for delicacy and the curious choice of wines is therein to be avoided. If you found your pleasure upon drinking of the best, you condemn yourself to the penance of drinking of the worst. Your taste must be more indifferent and free; so delicate a palate is not required to make a good toper. The Germans drink almost indifferently of all wines with delight; their business is to pour down and not to taste; and it's so much the better for them: their pleasure is so much the more plentiful and nearer at hand. Secondly, to drink, after the French fashion, but at two meals, and then very moderately, is to be too sparing of the favours of the god. There is more time and constancy required than so. The ancients spent whole nights in this exercise, and ofttimes added the day following to eke it out, and therefore we are to take greater liberty and stick closer to our work. I have seen a great lord of my time, a man of high enterprise and famous success, that without setting himself to't, and after his ordinary rate of drinking at meals, drank not much less than five quarts of wine, and at his going away appeared but too wise and discreet, to the detriment of our affairs. The pleasure we hold in esteem for the course of our lives ought to have a greater share of our time dedicated to it; we should, like shopboys and labourers, refuse no occasion nor omit any opportunity of drinking, and always have it in our minds. Methinks we every day abridge and curtail the use of wine, and that the after

breakfasts, dinner snatches, and collations I used to see in my father's house, when I was a boy, were more usual and frequent then than now.

Is it that we pretend to a reformation? Truly, no: but it may be we are more addicted to Venus than our fathers were. They are two exercises that thwart and hinder one another in their vigour. Lechery weakens our stomach on the one side; and on the other sobriety renders us more spruce and amorous for the exercise of love.

'Tis wonderful what strange stories I have heard my father tell of the chastity of that age wherein he lived. It was for him to say it, being both by art and nature cut out and finished for the service of ladies. He spoke well and little: ever mixing his language with some illustration out of authors most in use, especially in Spanish, and among the Spanish he whom they called Marcus Aurelius[1] was ordinarily in his mouth. His behaviour was gently grave, humble, and very modest; he was very solicitous of neatness and propriety both in his person and clothes, whether on horseback or afoot: he was monstrously punctual in his word; and of a conscience and religion generally tending rather towards superstition than otherwise. For a man of little stature, very strong, well proportioned, and well knit; of a pleasing countenance, inclining to brown, and very adroit in all noble exercises. I have seen also canes charged with lead, with which they say he exercised his arms for throwing the bar or the stone, or in fencing; and shoes with leaden soles to make him lighter for running or leaping. Of his vaulting he has left little miracles behind him: I have seen him when past three score laugh at our exercises, and

[1] Guevara's *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.*

throw himself in his furred gown into the saddle, make the tour of a table upon his thumbs, and scarce ever mount the stairs into his chamber without taking three or four steps at a time. But as to what I was speaking of before, he said there was scarce one woman of quality of ill fame in a whole province: he would tell of strange confidences, and some of them his own, with virtuous women, free from any manner of suspicion of ill, and for his own part solemnly swore he was a virgin at his marriage; and yet it was after a long practice of arms beyond the mountains, of which wars he left us a journal under his own hand, wherein he has given a precise account from point to point of all passages, both relating to the public and to himself. And he was, moreover, married at a well advanced maturity, in the year 1528, the three-and-thirtieth year of his age, upon his way home from Italy. Let us return to our bottles.

The incommodities of old age, that stand in need of some refreshment and support, might with reason beget in me a desire of this faculty, it being as it were the last pleasure the course of years deprives us of. The natural heat, say the good-fellows, first seats itself in the feet: that concerns infancy; thence it mounts into the middle region, where it makes a long abode and produces, in my opinion, the sole true pleasures of human life; all other pleasures in comparison sleep; towards the end, like a vapour that still mounts upward, it arrives at the throat, where it makes its final residence, and concludes the progress. I do not, nevertheless, understand how a man can extend the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, and forge in his imagination an appetite artificial and against nature; my stomach would not proceed so far; it has enough to do to

deal with what it takes in for its necessity. My constitution is not to care for drink but as following eating and washing down my meat, and for that reason my last draught is always the greatest. And seeing that in old age we have our palate furred with phlegms or depraved by some other ill constitution, the wine tastes better to us as the pores are cleaner washed and laid more open. At least, I seldom taste the first glass well. Anacharsis wondered[1] that the Greeks drank in greater glasses towards the end of a meal than at the beginning; which was, I suppose, for the same reason the Germans do the same, who then begin the battle of drink.

Plato[2] forbids children wine till eighteen years of age, and to get drunk till forty; but, after forty, gives them leave to please themselves, and to mix a little liberally in their feasts the influence of Dionysos, that good deity who restores to younger men their gaiety and to old men their youth; who mollifies the passions of the soul, as iron is softened by fire; and in his *Laws* allows such merry meetings, provided they have a discreet chief to govern and keep them in order, as good and of great utility; drunkenness being, he says, a true and certain trial of every one's nature, and, withal, fit to inspire old men with mettle to divert themselves in dancing and music; things of great use, and that they dare not attempt when sober. He, moreover, says that wine is able to supply the soul with temperance and the body with health. Nevertheless, these restrictions, in part borrowed from the Carthaginians, please him[3]: that men forbear

[1] Diogenes Laertius, i. 104.
[2] *Laws*, ii.
[3] *Ibid.*

excesses in the expeditions of war; that every judge and magistrate abstain from it when about the administrations of his place or the consultations of the public affairs; that the day is not to be employed with it, that being a time due to other occupations, nor the night on which a man intends to get children.

'Tis said that the philosopher Stilpo, when oppressed with age, purposely hastened his end by drinking pure wine.[1] The same thing, but not designed by him, despatched also the philosopher Arcesilaus.[2]

But 'tis an old and pleasant question, whether the soul of a wise man can be overcome by the strength of wine?—

"Si munitæ adhibet vim sapientiæ."[3]

To what vanity does the good opinion we have of ourselves push us? The most regular and most perfect soul in the world has but too much to do to keep itself upright, and from being overthrown by its own weakness. There is not one of a thousand that is right and settled so much as one minute in a whole life, and that may not very well doubt, whether according to her natural condition she ever can be; but to join constancy to it is her utmost perfection; I mean when nothing should jostle and discompose her, which a thousand accidents may do. 'Tis to much purpose that the great poet Lucretius keeps such a clatter with his philosophy, when, behold! he goes mad with a love philtre. Is it to be imagined that an apoplexy will not stun Socrates as well as a porter? Some

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 120.
[2] Idem, iv. 44.
[3] Horace, *Od.*, iii. 28, 4. The sense is in the preceding passage of the text.

men have forgotten their own names by the violence of a disease; and a slight wound has turned the judgment of others topsy-turvy. Let him be as wise as he will, after all he is but a man; and than that what is there more frail, more miserable, or more nothing? Wisdom does not force our natural dispositions:—

> "Sudores itaque, et pallorem exsistere toto
> Corpore, et infringi linguam, vocemque aboriri,
> Caligare oculos, sonere aures, succidere artus,
> Denique concidere, ex animi terrore, videmus"[1]:

he must shut his eyes against the blow that threatens him; he must tremble upon the margin of a precipice, like a child; nature having reserved these light marks of her authority, not to be forced by our reason and the stoic virtue, to teach man his mortality and our weakness; he turns pale with fear, red with shame, and groans with the cholic, if not with desperate outcry, at least with hoarse and broken voice:—

> "Humani a se nihil alienum putet."[2]

The poets, that feign all things at pleasure, dare not acquit their greatest heroes of tears:—

> "Sic fatur lacrymans, classique immittit habenas."[3]

'Tis sufficient for a man to curb and moderate his inclinations, for totally to suppress them is not in him to do. Even our great Plutarch, that excellent and perfect judge of human actions,

[1] "Sweat and paleness come over the whole body, the tongue is rendered powerless, the voice dies away, the eyes are darkened, there is ringing in the ears, the limbs sink under us by the influence of fear."—Lucretius, iii. 155.

[2] "Let him not think anything foreign to him which is incidental to men in general."—Terence, *Heauton*, i. 1, 25.

[3] "Thus he speaks, weeping, and then sets sail with his fleet."—*Æneid*, vi. 1.

when he sees Brutus and Torquatus kill their children, begins to doubt whether virtue could proceed so far, and to question whether these persons had not rather been stimulated by some other passion.[1] All actions exceeding the ordinary bounds are liable to sinister interpretation, forasmuch as our liking no more holds with what is above than with what is below it.

Let us leave that other sect, that sets up an express profession of scornful superiority[2]: but when even in that sect,[3] reputed the most quiet and gentle, we hear these rhodomontades of Metrodorus:—

"Occupavi te, Fortuna, atque cepi: omnesque aditus tuos interclusi ut ad me aspirare non posses[4];

when Anaxarchus, by command of Nicocreon the tyrant of Cyprus, was put into a stone mortar, and laid upon with mauls of iron, ceases not to say, "Strike, batter, break; 'tis not Anaxarchus, 'tis but his sheath that you pound and bray so"[5]; when we hear our martyrs cry out to the tyrant from the middle of the flame, "This side is roasted enough, fall to and eat, it is enough done; fall to work with the other"[6]; when we hear the child in Josephus[7] torn piece-meal with pincers, defying Antiochus, and crying out with a constant and assured voice: "Tyrant, thou losest thy labour, I am still at ease;

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Publicola*, c. 3.

[2] The Stoics. Cotton wrote: "Let us leave this other sect, *and make a downright profession of fierceness.*"

[3] The Epicureans.

[4] "Fortune, I have got the better of thee, and have made all the avenues so sure thou canst not come at me." — Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 9.

[5] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 58.

[6] This is what Prudentius makes St. Laurence say, in his book entitled Περι στεφανων (concerning Crowns), Hymn ii. 401.

[7] Macc., c. 8.

where is the pain, where are the torments with which thou didst so threaten me? Is this all thou canst do? My constancy torments thee more than thy cruelty does me. O pitiful coward, thou faintest, and I grow stronger; make me complain, make me bend, make me yield if thou canst; encourage thy guards, cheer up thy executioners; see, see they faint, and can do no more; arm them, flesh them anew, spur them up"; truly, a man must confess that there is some phrenzy, some fury, how holy soever, that at that time possesses those souls. When we come to these Stoical sallies: "I had rather be mad than voluptuous," a saying of Antisthenes, Μανείην μᾶλλον, ἢ ἡσθειην.[1] When Sextius tells us, "he had rather be fettered with affliction than pleasure": when Epicurus takes upon him to play with his gout, and, refusing health and ease, defies all torments, and despising the lesser pains, as disdaining to contend with them, he covets and calls out for others sharper, more violent, and more worthy of him:

> "Spumantemque dari, pecora inter inertia, votis
> Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem"[2]:

who but must conclude that these are wild sallies pushed on by a courage that has broken loose from its place? Our soul cannot from her own seat reach so high; 'tis necessary she must leave it, raise herself up, and, taking the bridle in her teeth, transport her man so far that he shall afterwards himself be astonished at what he has done; as, in war, the heat of battle impels generous soldiers to perform things of so infinite danger, as afterwards, recollecting them, they themselves are the first to

[1] Aulus Gellius, ix. 5.

[2] "And instead of timid beasts, wishes the foaming boar or tawny lion would come from the mountain."—*Æneid*, iv. 158.

wonder at; as it also fares with the poets, who are often rapt with admiration of their own writings, and know not where again to find the track through which they performed so fine a career; which also is in them called fury and rapture. And as Plato says,[1] 'tis to no purpose for a sober-minded man to knock at the door of poesy: so Aristotle says,[2] that no excellent soul is exempt from a mixture of madness; and he has reason to call all transports, how commendable soever, that surpass our own judgment and understanding, madness; forasmuch as wisdom is a regular government of the soul, which is carried on with measure and proportion, and for which she is to herself responsible. Plato[3] argues thus, that the faculty of prophesying is so far above us, that we must be out of ourselves when we meddle with it, and our prudence must either be obstructed by sleep or sickness, or lifted from her place by some celestial rapture.

CHAPTER III

A CUSTOM OF THE ISLE OF CEA[4]

If to philosophise be, as 'tis defined, to doubt,[5] much more to write at random and play the fool, as I do, ought to be reputed doubting, for it is for novices and freshmen to inquire and to dispute,

[1] Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, c. 15.
[2] *Problems*, sect. 30.
[3] *Timæus*.
[4] Or Cos. Cea is the form of the name given by Pliny. See Nodier, p. 209. Charron seems to have recollected the maxim that "imitation is the sincerest flattery." But Pascal evidently studied this chapter very attentively, and in his *Pensées* has borrowed several hints from it.
[5] Montaigne elsewhere describes philosophy as the knowledge of the art of dying.

and for the chairman to moderate and determine. My moderator is the authority of the divine will, that governs us without contradiction, and that is seated above these human and vain contestations.

Philip having forcibly entered into Peloponnesus, and some one saying to Damidas that the Lacedæmonians were likely very much to suffer if they did not in time reconcile themselves to his favour: "Why, you pitiful fellow," replied he, "what can they suffer who do not fear to die?" It being also asked of Agis, which way a man might live free? "Why," said he, "by despising death." These, and a thousand other sayings to the same purpose, distinctly sound of something more than the patient attending the stroke of death when it shall come; for there are several accidents in life far worse to suffer than death itself. Witness the Lacedæmonian boy taken by Antigonus, and sold for a slave, who being by his master commanded to some base employment: "Thou shalt see," says the boy, "whom thou hast bought; it would be a shame for me to serve, being so near the reach of liberty," and having so said, threw himself from the top of the house. Antipater severely threatening the Lacedæmonians, that he might the better incline them to acquiesce in a certain demand of his: "If thou threatenest us with more than death," replied they, "we shall the more willingly die"; and to Philip, having written them word that he would frustrate all their enterprises: "What, wilt thou also hinder us from dying?" This is the meaning of the sentence,[1] "That the wise man lives as long as he ought, not so long as he can; and that the most obliging present Nature has

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 70.

made us, and which takes from us all colour of complaint of our condition, is to have delivered into our own custody the keys of life; she has only ordered one door into life, but a hundred thousand ways out. We may be straitened for earth to live upon, but earth sufficient to die upon can never be wanting, as Boiocalus answered the Romans."[1] Why dost thou complain of this world? it detains thee not; thy own cowardice is the cause, if thou livest in pain. There needs no more to die but to will to die:—

> "Ubique mors est; optime hoc cavit deus.
> Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest;
> At nemo mortem; mille ad hanc aditus patent."[2]

Neither is it a recipe for one disease only[3]; death is the infallible cure of all; 'tis a most assured port that is never to be feared, and very often to be sought. It comes all to one, whether a man give himself his end, or stays to receive it by some other means; whether he pays before his day, or stay till his day of payment come; from whencesoever it comes, it is still his; in what part soever the thread breaks, there's the end of the clue. The most voluntary death is the finest. Life depends upon the pleasure of others; death upon our own. We ought not to accommodate ourselves to our own humour in anything so much as in this. Reputation is not concerned in such an enterprise; 'tis folly to be concerned by any such apprehension. Living is slavery if the liberty of dying be wanting. The ordinary method of cure is carried on at the

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.*, xiii. 56.

[2] "Death is everywhere: heaven has well provided for that. Any one may deprive us of life; no one can deprive us of death. To death there are a thousand avenues."—Seneca, *Thebs*, i. 1, 151.

[3] Seneca, *Ep.*, 69, 71.

expense of life; they torment us with caustics, incisions, and amputations of limbs; they interdict aliment and exhaust our blood; one step farther and we are cured indeed and effectually. Why is not the jugular vein as much at our disposal as the median vein? For a desperate disease a desperate cure. Servius the grammarian, being tormented with the gout, could think of no better remedy than to apply poison to his legs,[1] to deprive them of their sense; let them be gouty at their will, so they were insensible of pain. God gives us leave enough to go when He is pleased to reduce us to such a condition that to live is far worse than to die. 'Tis weakness to truckle under infirmities, but it's madness to nourish them. The Stoics say,[2] that it is living according to nature in a wise man to take his leave of life, even in the height of prosperity, if he do it opportunely; and in a fool to prolong it, though he be miserable, provided he be not indigent of those things which they repute to be according to nature. As I do not offend the law against thieves when I embezzle my own money and cut my own purse; nor that against incendiaries when I burn my own wood; so am I not under the lash of those made against murderers for having deprived myself of my own life. Hegesias said,[3] that as the condition of life did, so the condition of death ought to depend upon our own choice. And Diogenes meeting the philosopher Speusippus, so blown up with an inveterate dropsy that he was fain to be carried in a litter, and by him saluted with the compliment, "I wish you good health." "No health to thee," replied the other, "who art content to live in such a condition."[4]

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxv. 3.
[2] Cicero, *De Finib.*, iii. 18.
[3] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 94.
[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 3.

And in fact, not long after, Speusippus, weary of so languishing a state of life, found a means to die.

But this does not pass without admitting a dispute: for many are of opinion that we cannot quit this garrison of the world without the express command of Him who has placed us in it; and that it appertains to God who has placed us here, not for ourselves only but for His Glory and the service of others, to dismiss us when it shall best please Him, and not for us to depart without His licence: that we are not born for ourselves only, but for our country also, the laws of which require an account from us upon the score of their own interest, and have an action of manslaughter good against us; and if these fail to take cognisance of the fact, we are punished in the other world as deserters of our duty:—

> "Proxima deinde tenent mæsti loca, qui sibi letum
> Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
> Proiecere animas."[1]

There is more constancy in suffering the chain we are tied to than in breaking it, and more pregnant evidence of fortitude in Regulus than in Cato; 'tis indiscretion and impatience that push us on to these precipices: no accidents can make true virtue turn her back; she seeks and requires evils, pains, and grief, as the things by which she is nourished and supported; the menaces of tyrants, racks, and tortures serve only to animate and rouse her:—

> "Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus
> Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido,
> Per damma, per cædes, ab ipso
> Ducit opes, animumque ferro."[2]

[1] "Thence the sad ones occupy the next abodes, who, though free from guilt, were by their own hands slain, and, hating light, sought death."—*Æneid*, vi. 434.

[2] "As in Mount Algidus, the sturdy oak even from the axe itself derives new vigour and life."—Horace, *Od.*, iv. 4, 57.

And as another says:—

"Non est, ut putas, virtus, pater,
Timere vitam; sed malis ingentibus
Obstare, nec se vertere, ac retro dare."[1]

Or as this:—

"Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere mortem:
Fortius ille facit, qui miser esse potest."[2]

'Tis cowardice, not virtue, to lie squat in a furrow, under a tomb, to evade the blows of fortune; virtue never stops nor goes out of her path, for the greatest storm that blows:—

"Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ."[3]

For the most part, the flying from other inconveniences brings us to this; nay, endeavouring to evade death, we often run into its very mouth:—

"Hic, rogo, non furor est, ne moriare, mori?"[4]

like those who, from fear of a precipice, throw themselves headlong into it:—

"Multos in summa pericula misit
Venturi timor ipse mali: fortissimus ille est,
Qui promptus metuenda pati, si cominus instent,
Et differre potest."[5]

"Usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitæ
Percipit humanos odium, lucisque videndæ,

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[1] "Father, 'tis no virtue to fear life, but to withstand great misfortunes, nor turn back from them."—Seneca, *Theb.*, i. 190.

[2] "It is easy in adversity to despise death; but he acts more bravely, who can live wretched."—Martial, xi. 56, 15.

[3] "Should the world's axis crack, the ruins will but crush a fearless head."—Horace, *Od.*, iii. 3, 7.

[4] "Tell me, is it not madness, that one should die for fear of dying?"—Martial, ii. 80, 2.

[5] "The fear of future ills often makes men run into extreme danger; he is truly brave who boldly dares withstand the mischiefs he apprehends, when they confront him and can be deferred."—Lucan, vii. 104.

Ut sibi consciscant mœrenti pectore lethum,
Obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem."[1]

Plato, in his *Laws*, assigns an ignominious sepulture to him who has deprived his nearest and best friend, namely himself, of life and his destined course, being neither compelled so to do by public judgment, by any sad and inevitable accident of fortune, nor by any insupportable disgrace, but merely pushed on by cowardice and the imbecility of a timorous soul. And the opinion that makes so little of life, is ridiculous; for it is our being, 'tis all we have. Things of a nobler and more elevated being may, indeed, reproach ours; but it is against nature for us to contemn and make little account of ourselves; 'tis a disease particular to man, and not discerned in any other creatures, to hate and despise itself. And it is a vanity of the same stamp to desire to be something else than what we are; the effect of such a desire does not at all touch us, forasmuch as it is contradicted and hindered in itself. He that desires of a man to be made an angel, does nothing for himself; he would be never the better for it; for, being no more, who shall rejoice or be sensible of this benefit for him?—

"Debet enim, misere cui forti, ægreque futurum est,
Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cum male possit
Accidere."[2]

Security, indolence, impassability, the privation of the evils of this life, which we pretend to purchase at the price of dying, are of no manner of

[1] "Death to that degree so frightens some men, that causing them to hate both life and light, they kill themselves, miserably forgetting that this same fear is the fountain of their cares."—Lucretius, iii. 79.

[2] "For he to whom misery and pain are to be in the future, must himself then exist, when these ills befall him."—Idem, *ibid.*, 874.

advantage to us: that man evades war to very little purpose who can have no fruition of peace; and as little to the purpose does he avoid trouble who cannot enjoy repose.

Amongst those of the first of these two opinions, there has been great debate, what occasions are sufficient to justify the meditation of self-murder, which they call εὔλογον ἐξαγωγὴν.[1] For though they say that men must often die for trivial causes, seeing those that detain us in life are of no very great weight, yet there is to be some limit. There are fantastic and senseless humours that have prompted not only individual men, but whole nations to destroy themselves, of which I have elsewhere given some examples; and we further read of the Milesian virgins, that by a frantic compact they hanged themselves one after another till the magistrate took order in it, enacting that the bodies of such as should be found so hanged should be drawn by the same halter stark naked through the city.[2] When Therykion[3] tried to persuade Cleomenes to despatch himself, by reason of the ill posture of his affairs, and, having missed a death of more honour in the battle he had lost, to accept of this the second in honour to it, and not to give the conquerors leisure to make him undergo either an ignominious death or an infamous life: Cleomenes, with a courage truly Stoic and Lacedæmonian, rejected his counsel as unmanly and mean; "that," said he, "is a remedy that can never be wanting, but which a man is never to make use of, whilst there is an inch of hope remaining": telling him, "that it was sometimes

[1] "A reasonable exit."—Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Zeno.*

[2] Plutarch, *Virtuous Deeds of Women.*

[3] Idem, *Life of Cleomenes*; Therykion was foster-brother to Cleomenes.

constancy and valour to live; that he would that even his death should be of use to his country, and would make of it an act of honour and virtue." Therykion, notwithstanding, thought himself in the right, and did his own business; and Cleomenes afterwards did the same, but not till he had first tried the utmost malevolence of fortune. All the inconveniences in the world are not considerable enough that a man should die to evade them; and, besides, there being so many, so sudden and unexpected changes in human things, it is hard rightly to judge when we are at the end of our hope:—

> "Sperat et in sæva victus gladiator arena,
> Sit licet infesto pollice turba minax."[1]

All things, says an old adage,[2] are to be hoped for by a man whilst he lives; ay, but, replies Seneca, why should this rather be always running in a man's head that fortune can do all things for the living man, than this, that fortune has no power over him that knows how to die? Josephus,[3] when engaged in so near and apparent danger, a whole people being violently bent against him, that there was no visible means of escape, nevertheless, being, as he himself says, in this extremity counselled by one of his friends to despatch himself, it was well for him that he yet maintained himself in hope, for fortune diverted the accident beyond all human expectation, so that he saw himself delivered without any manner of inconvenience. Whereas Brutus and Cassius, on the contrary, threw away the remains of the Roman liberty, of which they were the sole protectors, by the precipitation and temerity where-

[1] "The gladiator conquered in the lists hopes on, though the menacing spectators, turning their thumb, order him to die."—Pentadius, *De Spe*, ap. Virgilii *Catalecta*.

[2] Seneca, *Ep.*, 70.

[3] Josephus, *De Vitâ Suâ*.

with they killed themselves before the due time and a just occasion. Monsieur d'Anguien,[1] at the battle of Serisolles,[2] twice attempted to run himself through, despairing of the fortune of the day, which went indeed very untowardly on that side of the field where he was engaged, and by that precipitation was very near depriving himself of the enjoyment of so brave a victory. I have seen a hundred hares escape out of the very teeth of the greyhounds:—

> "Aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit."[3]

> "Multa dies, variusque labor mutabilis ævi
> Rettulit in melius; multos alterna revisens
> Lusit, et in solido rursus fortuna locavit."[4]

Pliny says there are but three sorts of diseases, to escape which a man has good title to destroy himself; the worst of which is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is suppressed.[5] Seneca says those only which for a long time are discomposing the functions of the soul. And some there have been who, to avoid a worse death, have chosen one to their own liking. Democritus, general of the Ætolians, being brought prisoner to Rome, found means to make his escape by night: but close pursued by his keepers, rather than suffer

[1] Montluc, *Comment.* [2] In 1544.

[3] "Some one has survived his executioner."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 13.

[4] "Length of days, and the various labour of changeful time, have brought things to a better state; fortune turning, shews a reverse face, and again restores men to prosperity."—*Æneid*, xi. 425.

[5] "In the quarto edition of these essays, in 1588, Pliny is said to mention two more, viz., a pain in the stomach and a headache, which, he says (lib. xxv. c. 3), were the only three distempers almost for which men killed themselves: as to their right of killing themselves, he does not mention a word of it here; and I cannot conceive why Montaigne, who, at first, entered thoroughly into Pliny's sense, by saying that, according to this author, it was the custom for men to kill themselves, in order to be rid of any one of these three distempers, made him say afterwards, that they had a right to kill themselves for this very end."—Coste.

himself to be retaken, he fell upon his own sword and died.[1] Antinous and Theodotus, their city of Epirus being reduced by the Romans to the last extremity, gave the people counsel universally to kill themselves; but, these preferring to give themselves up to the enemy, the two chiefs went to seek the death they desired, rushing furiously upon the enemy, with intention to strike home but not to ward a blow. The Island of Gozzo being taken some years ago by the Turks, a Sicilian, who had two beautiful daughters marriageable, killed them both with his own hand, and their mother, running in to save them, to boot, which having done, sallying out of the house with a cross-bow and harquebus, with two shots he killed two of the Turks nearest to his door, and drawing his sword, charged furiously in amongst the rest, where he was suddenly enclosed and cut to pieces, by that means delivering his family and himself from slavery and dishonour. The Jewish women, after having circumcised their children, threw them and themselves down a precipice to avoid the cruelty of Antigonus. I have been told of a person of condition in one of our prisons, that his friends, being informed that he would certainly be condemned, to avoid the ignominy of such a death suborned a priest to tell him that the only means of his deliverance was to recommend himself to such a saint, under such and such vows, and to fast eight days together without taking any manner of nourishment, what weakness or faintness soever he might find in himself during the time; he followed their advice, and by that means destroyed himself before he was aware, not dreaming of death or any danger in the experiment. Scribonia advising her

[1] Livy, xxxvii. 46.

nephew Libo to kill himself rather than await the stroke of justice, told him [1] that it was to do other people's business to preserve his life to put it after into the hands of those who within three or four days would fetch him to execution, and that it was to serve his enemies to keep his blood to gratify their malice.

We read in the Bible that Nicanor,[2] the persecutor of the law of God, having sent his soldiers to seize upon the good old man Razis, surnamed in honour of his virtue the father of the Jews: the good man, seeing no other remedy, his gates burned down, and the enemies ready to seize him, choosing rather to die nobly than to fall into the hands of his wicked adversaries and suffer himself to be cruelly butchered by them, contrary to the honour of his rank and quality, stabbed himself with his own sword, but the blow, for haste, not having been given home, he ran and threw himself from the top of a wall headlong among them, who separating themselves and making room, he pitched directly upon his head; notwithstanding which, feeling yet in himself some remains of life, he renewed his courage, and starting up upon his feet all bloody and wounded as he was, and making his way through the crowd to a precipitous rock, there, through one of his wounds, drew out his bowels, which, tearing and pulling to pieces with both his hands, he threw amongst his pursuers, all the while attesting and invoking the Divine vengeance upon them for their cruelty and injustice.

Of violences offered to the conscience, that against the chastity of woman is, in my opinion, most to be avoided, forasmuch as there is a certain pleasure naturally mixed with it, and for that reason the

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 70.

[2] 2 *Macchabes*, xiv. 37.

dissent therein cannot be sufficiently perfect and entire, so that the violence seems to be mixed with a little consent of the forced party. The ecclesiastical history has several examples of devout persons who have embraced death to secure them from the outrages prepared by tyrants against their religion and honour. Pelagia and Sophronia, both canonised, the first of these precipitated herself with her mother and sisters into the river to avoid being forced by some soldiers, and the last also killed herself to avoid being ravished by the Emperor Maxentius.

It may, peradventure, be an honour to us in future ages, that a learned author of this present time, and a Parisian, takes a great deal of pains to persuade the ladies of our age rather to take any other course than to enter into the horrid meditation of such a despair. I am sorry he had never heard, that he might have inserted it amongst his other stories, the saying of a woman, which was told me at Toulouse, who had passed through the handling of some soldiers: "God be praised," said she, "that once at least in my life I have had my fill without sin." In truth, these cruelties are very unworthy the French good nature, and also, God be thanked, our air is very well purged of them since this good advice: 'tis enough that they say "no" in doing it, according to the rule of the good Marot.[1]

History is everywhere full of those who by a thousand ways have exchanged a painful and irksome life for death. Lucius Aruntius killed himself, to fly, he said, both the future and the past.[2]

[1] "Un doulx nenny, avec un doulx sourire
Est tant honneste."—Marot.

"Say No, and take it," as the phrase is in English, or "Laugh and lie down." The *French good nature*, of which the essayist speaks, is unknown outside France.

[2] Tacitus, *Annal.*, vi. 48.

Granius Silvanus and Statius Proximus, after having been pardoned by Nero, killed themselves[1]; either disdaining to live by the favour of so wicked a man, or that they might not be troubled, at some other time, to obtain a second pardon, considering the proclivity of his nature to suspect and credit accusations against worthy men. Spargapises, son of Queen Tomyris, being a prisoner of war to Cyrus, made use of the first favour Cyrus shewed him, in commanding him to be unbound, to kill himself, having pretended to no other benefit of liberty, but only to be revenged of himself for the disgrace of being taken.[2] Boges, governor in Eion for King Xerxes, being besieged by the Athenian army under the conduct of Cimon, refused the conditions offered, that he might safe return into Asia with all his wealth, impatient to survive the loss of a place his master had given him to keep; wherefore, having defended the city to the last extremity, nothing being left to eat, he first threw all the gold and whatever else the enemy could make booty of into the river Strymon, and then causing a great pile to be set on fire, and the throats of all the women, children, concubines, and servants to be cut, he threw their bodies into the fire, and at last leaped into it himself.

Ninachetuen, an Indian lord, so soon as he heard the first whisper of the Portuguese Viceroy's determination to dispossess him, without any apparent cause, of his command in Malacca, to transfer it to the King of Campar, he took this resolution with himself: he caused a scaffold, more long than broad, to be erected, supported by columns royally adorned with tapestry and strewed with flowers and abundance of perfumes; all which being prepared, in a

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.*, xv. 71. [2] Herodotus, i. 213.

robe of cloth of gold, set full of jewels of great value, he came out into the street, and mounted the steps to the scaffold, at one corner of which he had a pile lighted of aromatic wood. Everybody ran to see to what end these unusual preparations were made; when Ninachetuen, with a manly but displeased countenance, set forth how much he had obliged the Portuguese nation, and with how unspotted fidelity he had carried himself in his charge; that having so often, sword in hand, manifested in the behalf of others, that honour was much more dear to him than life, he was not to abandon the concern of it for himself: that fortune denying him all means of opposing the affront designed to be put upon him, his courage at least enjoined him to free himself from the sense of it, and not to serve for a fable to the people, nor for a triumph to men less deserving than himself; which having said he leaped into the fire.

Sextilia, wife of Scaurus, and Paxæa, wife of Labeo, to encourage their husbands to avoid the dangers that pressed upon them, wherein they had no other share than conjugal affection, voluntarily sacrificed their own lives to serve them in this extreme necessity for company and example.[1] What they did for their husbands, Cocceius Nerva did for his country, with less utility though with equal affection: this great lawyer, flourishing in health, riches, reputation, and favour with the Emperor, had no other cause to kill himself but the sole compassion of the miserable state of the Roman Republic.[2] Nothing can be added to the beauty of the death of the wife of Fulvius, a familiar favourite of Augustus: Augustus having discovered that he had vented an important secret he had

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.*, vi. 29. [2] Idem, *ibid.*, 26.

intrusted him withal, one morning that he came to make his court, received him very coldly and looked frowningly upon him. He returned home, full of despair, where he sorrowfully told his wife that, having fallen into this misfortune, he was resolved to kill himself: to which she roundly replied, "'tis but reason you should, seeing that having so often experienced the incontinence of my tongue, you could not take warning: but let me kill myself first," and without any more saying ran herself through the body with a sword.[1] Vibius Virrius, despairing of the safety of his city besieged by the Romans and of their mercy, in the last deliberation of his city's senate, after many arguments conducing to that end, concluded that the most noble means to escape fortune was by their own hands: telling them that the enemy would have them in honour, and Hannibal would be sensible how many faithful friends he had abandoned; inviting those who approved of his advice to come to a good supper he had ready at home, where after they had eaten well, they would drink together of what he had prepared; a beverage, said he, that will deliver our bodies from torments, our souls from insult, and our eyes and ears from the sense of so many hateful mischiefs, as the conquered suffer from cruel and implacable conquerors. I have, said he, taken order for fit persons to throw our bodies into a funeral pile before my door so soon as we are dead. Many enough approved this high resolution, but few imitated it; seven-and-twenty senators followed him, who, after having tried to drown the thought of this fatal determination in wine, ended the feast with the mortal mess; and embracing one another, after they had jointly deplored the

[1] Plutarch on Loquacity, c. 9.

misfortune of their country, some retired home to their own houses, others stayed to be burned with Vibius in his funeral pyre; and were all of them so long in dying, the vapour of the wine having prepossessed the veins, and by that means deferred the effect of poison, that some of them were within an hour of seeing the enemy inside the walls of Capua, which was taken the next morning, and of undergoing the miseries they had at so dear a rate endeavoured to avoid.[1] Jubellius Taurea, another citizen of the same country, the Consul Fulvius returning from the shameful butchery he had made of two hundred and twenty-five senators, called him back fiercely by name, and having made him stop: "Give the word," said he, "that somebody may dispatch me after the massacre of so many others, that thou mayest boast to have killed a much more valiant man than thyself." Fulvius, disdaining him as a man out of his wits, and also having received letters from Rome censuring the inhumanity of his execution which tied his hands, Jubellius proceeded: "Since my country has been taken, my friends dead, and having with my own hands slain my wife and children to rescue them from the desolation of this ruin, I am denied to die the death of my fellow-citizens, let me borrow from virtue vengeance on this hated life," and therewithal drawing a short sword he carried concealed about him, he ran it through his own bosom, falling down backward, and expiring at the consul's feet.[2]

Alexander, laying siege to a city of the Indies, those within, finding themselves very hardly set, put on a vigorous resolution to deprive him of the pleasure of his victory, and accordingly burned themselves in general, together with their city, in

[1] Livy, xxvi. 1315. [2] Idem, xxvi. 15.

despite of his humanity: a new kind of war, where the enemies sought to save them, and they to destroy themselves, doing to make themselves sure of death, all that men do to secure life.[1]

Astapa, a city of Spain,[2] finding itself weak in walls and defence to withstand the Romans, the inhabitants made a heap of all their riches and furniture in the public place; and, having ranged upon this heap all the women and children, and piled them round with wood and other combustible matter to take sudden fire, and left fifty of their young men for the execution of that whereon they had resolved, they made a desperate sally, where for want of power to overcome, they caused themselves to be every man slain. The fifty, after having massacred every living soul throughout the whole city, and put fire to this pile, threw themselves lastly into it, finishing their generous liberty, rather after an insensible, than after a sorrowful and disgraceful manner, giving the enemy to understand, that if fortune had been so pleased, they had as well the courage to snatch from them victory as they had to frustrate and render it dreadful, and even mortal to those who, allured by the splendour of the gold melting in this flame, having approached it, a great number were there suffocated and burned, being kept from retiring by the crowd that followed after.[3]

The Abydeans, being pressed by King Philip, put on the same resolution; but, not having time, they could not put it in effect. The king, who was struck with horror at the rash precipitation of this execution (the treasure and movables that they

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 18.
[2] Of Hispania Bœtica. Its exact site is uncertain.
[3] Livy, xxviii. 22, 23.

had condemned to the flames being first seized), drawing off his soldiers, granted them three days' time to kill themselves in, that they might do it with more order and at greater ease: which time they filled with blood and slaughter beyond the utmost excess of all hostile cruelty, so that not so much as any one soul was left alive that had power to destroy itself.[1] There are infinite examples of like popular resolutions which seem the more fierce and cruel in proportion as the effect is more universal, and yet are really less so than when singly executed; what arguments and persuasion cannot do with individual men, they can do with all, the ardour of society ravishing particular judgments.

The condemned who would live to be executed in the reign of Tiberius, forfeited their goods and were denied the rites of sepulture; those who, by killing themselves, anticipated it, were interred, and had liberty to dispose of their estates by will.[2]

But men sometimes covet death out of hope of a greater good. "I desire," says St. Paul,[3] "to be with Christ," and "who shall rid me of these bands?" Cleombrotus of Ambracia,[4] having read Plato's *Phædo*, entered into so great a desire of the life to come that, without any other occasion, he threw himself into the sea. By which it appears how improperly we call this voluntary dissolution, despair, to which the eagerness of hope often inclines us, and, often, a calm and temperate desire proceeding from a mature and deliberate judgment. Jacques du Chastel, bishop of Soissons, in St. Louis's foreign expedition, seeing the king and whole army upon the point of returning into France, leaving the affairs of religion imperfect,

[1] Livy, xxxi. 17, 18.
[2] Tacitus, *Annal.*, vi. 29.
[3] *Ep. to the Philippians*, i. 23.
[4] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 34.

took a resolution rather to go into Paradise; wherefore, having taken solemn leave of his friends, he charged alone, in the sight of every one, into the enemy's army, where he was presently cut to pieces. In a certain kingdom of the new-discovered world, upon a day of solemn procession, when the idol[1] they adore is drawn about in public upon a chariot of marvellous greatness; besides that many are then seen cutting off pieces of their flesh to offer to him, there are a number of others who prostrate themselves upon the place, causing themselves to be crushed and broken to pieces under the weighty wheels, to obtain the veneration of sanctity after death, which is accordingly paid them. The death of the bishop, sword in hand, has more of magnanimity in it, and less of sentiment, the ardour of combat taking away part of the latter.

There are some governments who have taken upon them to regulate the justice and opportunity of voluntary death. In former times there was kept in our city of Marseilles a poison prepared out of hemlock, at the public charge, for those who had a mind to hasten their end, having first, before the six hundred, who were their senate, given account of the reasons and motives of their design, and it was not otherwise lawful, than by leave from the magistrate and upon just occasion to do violence to themselves.[2] The same law was also in use in other places.

Sextus Pompeius, in his expedition into Asia, touched at the isle of Cea in Negropont: it happened whilst he was there, as we have it from one that was with him,[3] that a woman of great quality, having given an account to her citizens

[1] The Juggernaut.

[2] Valerius Maximus, ii. 6, 7.

[3] Idem, *ibid.*, vi. 8.

why she was resolved to put an end to her life, invited Pompeius to her death, to render it the more honourable, an invitation that he accepted; and having long tried in vain by the power of his eloquence, which was very great, and persuasion, to divert her from that design, he acquiesced in the end in her own will. She had passed the age of four score and ten in a very happy state, both of body and mind; being then laid upon her bed, better dressed than ordinary and leaning upon her elbow, "The gods," said she, "O Sextus Pompeius, and rather those I leave than those I go to seek, reward thee, for that thou hast not disdained to be both the counsellor of my life and the witness of my death. For my part, having always experienced the smiles of fortune, for fear lest the desire of living too long may make me see a contrary face, I am going, by a happy end, to dismiss the remains of my soul, leaving behind two daughters of my body and a legion of nephews"; which having said, with some exhortations to her family to live in peace, she divided amongst them her goods, and recommending her domestic gods to her eldest daughter, she boldly took the bowl that contained the poison, and having made her vows and prayers to Mercury to conduct her to some happy abode in the other world, she roundly swallowed the mortal poison. This being done, she entertained the company with the progress of its operation, and how the cold by degrees seized the several parts of her body one after another, till having in the end told them it began to seize upon her heart and bowels, she called her daughters to do the last office and close her eyes.

Pliny[1] tells us of a certain Hyperborean nation

[1] *Nat. Hist.*, iv. 12.

where, by reason of the sweet temperature of the air, lives rarely ended but by the voluntary surrender of the inhabitants, who, being weary of and satiated with living, had the custom, at a very old age, after having made good cheer, to precipitate themselves into the sea from the top of a certain rock, assigned for that service. Pain and the fear of a worse death seem to me the most excusable incitements.[1]

CHAPTER IV

BUSINESS TO-MORROW

I GIVE, as it seems to me, with good reason the palm to Jacques Amyot of all our French writers, not only for the simplicity and purity of his language, wherein he excels all others, nor for his constancy in going through so long a work,[2] nor for the depth of his knowledge, having been able so successfully to smooth and unravel so knotty and intricate an author (for let people tell me what they will, I understand nothing of Greek, but I meet with sense so well united and maintained throughout his whole translation, that certainly he either knew the true fancy of the author, or having, by being long conversant with him, imprinted a vivid and general idea of that of Plutarch in his soul, he has delivered us nothing that either derogates from or contradicts him), but above all, I am the most taken with him for having made so discreet a choice of a book so worthy and of so great utility wherewith

[1] See Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 27 ; and Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, liv. ii., lett. 1 and 2.

[2] The Translation of Plutarch.

to present his country. We ignorant fellows had been lost, had not this book raised us out of the dirt; by this favour of his we dare now speak and write; the ladies are able to read to schoolmasters; 'tis our breviary. If this good man be yet living, I would recommend to him Xenophon, to do as much by that; 'tis a much more easy task than the other, and consequently more proper for his age. And, besides, though I know not how, methinks he does briskly and clearly enough trip over steps another would have stumbled at, yet nevertheless his style seems to be more his own where he does not encounter those difficulties, and rolls away at his own ease.

I was just now reading this passage where Plutarch[1] says of himself, that Rusticus being present at a declamation of his at Rome, there received a packet from the emperor, and deferred to open it till all was done: for which, says he, all the company highly applauded the gravity of this person. 'Tis true, that being upon the subject of curiosity and of that eager passion for news, which makes us with so much indiscretion and impatience leave all to entertain a new-comer, and without any manner of respect or outcry, tear open on a sudden, in what company soever, the letters that are delivered to us, he had reason to applaud the gravity of Rusticus upon this occasion; and might moreover have added to it the commendation of his civility and courtesy, that would not interrupt the current of his declamation. But I doubt whether any one can commend his prudence; for receiving unexpected letters, and especially from an emperor, it might have fallen out that the deferring to read them might have been of

[1] *Of Curiosity*, c. 14.

great prejudice. The vice opposite to curiosity is negligence, to which I naturally incline, and wherein I have seen some men so extreme that one might have found letters sent them three or four days before, still sealed up in their pockets.

I never open any letters directed to another, not only those intrusted with me, but even such as fortune has guided to my hand; and am angry with myself if my eyes unawares steal any contents of letters of importance he is reading when I stand near a great man. Never was man less inquisitive or less prying into other men's affairs than I.

In our fathers' days, Monsieur de Boutières had like to have lost Turin from having, while engaged in good company at supper, delayed to read information that was sent him of the treason plotted against that city where he commanded. And this very Plutarch[1] has given me to understand, that Julius Cæsar had preserved himself, if, going to the Senate the day he was assassinated by the conspirators, he had read a note which was presented to him by the way. He tells also[2] the story of Archias, the tyrant of Thebes, that the night before the execution of the design Pelopidas had plotted to kill him to restore his country to liberty, he had a full account sent him in writing by another Archias, an Athenian, of the whole conspiracy, and that, this packet having been delivered to him while he sat at supper, he deferred the opening of it, saying, which afterwards turned to a proverb in Greece, "Business to-morrow."

A wise man may, I think, out of respect to another, as not to disturb the company, as Rusticus did, or not to break off another affair of importance

[1] *Life of Cæsar*, c. 17.
[2] In his *Treatise on the Demon of Socrates*, c. 27.

in hand, defer to read or hear any new thing that is brought him; but for his own interest or particular pleasure, especially if he be a public minister, that he will not interrupt his dinner or break his sleep is inexcusable. And there was anciently at Rome, the consular place,[1] as they called it, which was the most honourable at the table, as being a place of most liberty, and of more convenient access to those who came in to speak to the person seated there; by which it appears, that being at meat, they did not totally abandon the concern of other affairs and incidents. But when all is said, it is very hard in human actions to give so exact a rule upon moral reasons, that fortune will not therein maintain her own right.

CHAPTER V

OF CONSCIENCE

The Sieur de la Brousse, my brother, and I, travelling one day together during the time of our civil wars, met a gentleman of good sort. He was of the contrary party, though I did not know so much, for he pretended otherwise: and the mischief on't is, that in this sort of war the cards are so shuffled, your enemy not being distinguished from yourself by any apparent mark either of language or habit, and being nourished under the same law, air, and manners, it is very hard to avoid disorder and confusion. This made me afraid myself of meeting any of our troops in a place where I was not known, that I might not

[1] Plutarch, *Table Talk*, i. 3, 2.

be in fear to tell my name, and peradventure of something worse; as it had befallen me before, where, by such a mistake, I lost both men and horses, and amongst others an Italian gentleman my page, whom I bred with the greatest care and affection, was miserably slain, in whom a youth of great promise and expectation was extinguished. But the gentleman my brother and I met had so desperate, half-dead a fear upon him at meeting with any horse, or passing by any of the towns that held for the King, that I at last discovered it to be alarms of conscience. It seemed to the poor man as if through his visor and the crosses upon his cassock, one would have penetrated into his bosom and read the most secret intentions of his heart; so wonderful is the power of conscience. It makes us betray, accuse, and fight against ourselves, and for want of other witnesses, to give evidence against ourselves:—

"Occultum quatiens animo tortore flagellum."[1]

This story is in every child's mouth: Bessus the Pæonian, being reproached for wantonly pulling down a nest of young sparrows and killing them, replied, that he had reason to do so, seeing that those little birds never ceased falsely to accuse him of the murder of his father. This parricide had till then been concealed and unknown, but the revenging fury of conscience caused it to be discovered by him himself, who was to suffer for it.[2] Hesiod corrects the saying of Plato, that punishment closely follows sin, it being, as he says, born at the same time with it.[2] Whoever

[1] "The torturer of the soul brandishing a sharp scourge within."—Juvenal, iii. 195.

[2] Plutarch on *Divine Justice*, c. viii. 9.

expects punishment already suffers it, and whoever has deserved it expects it.[1] Wickedness contrives torments against itself:—

"Malum consilium consultori pessimum"[2]:

as the wasp stings and hurts another, but most of all itself, for it there loses its sting and its use for ever:—

"Animasque in vulnere ponunt."[3]

Cantharides have somewhere about them, by a contrariety of nature, a counterpoison against their poison.[4] In like manner, at the same time that men take delight in vice, there springs in the conscience a displeasure that afflicts us sleeping and waking with various tormenting imaginations: —

"Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes,
Aut morbo delirantes, protraxe ferantur,
Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse."[5]

Apollodorus dreamed that he saw himself flayed by the Scythians and afterwards boiled in a cauldron, and that his heart muttered these words: "I am the cause of all these mischiefs that have befallen thee."[6] Epicurus said that no hiding-hole could conceal the wicked, since they could never assure themselves of being hid whilst their conscience discovered them to themselves[7]:—

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 105, at the end.
[2] "Ill designs are worst to the contriver."—Apud Aul. Gellium, iv. 5.
[3] "And lay down their lives in the wound."—Virgil, *Geo.*, iv. 238.
[4] Plutarch on *Divine Justice*, c. ix.
[5] "Surely where many, often talking in their sleep, or raving in disease, are said to have betrayed themselves, and to have given publicity to offences long concealed."—Lucretius, v. 1157.
[6] Apollodorus was tyrant of Cassandria, in Macedonia.—Plutarch, *ubi suprâ*, c. 9; Polyænus, iv. 6, 18.
[7] Seneca, *Ep.*, 97.

"Prima est hæc ultio, quod se
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur."[1]

As an ill conscience fills us with fear, so a good one gives us greater confidence and assurance; and I can truly say that I have gone through several hazards with a more steady pace in consideration of the secret knowledge I had of my own will and the innocence of my intentions:—

"Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra
Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo."[2]

Of this are a thousand examples; but it will be enough to instance three of one and the same person. Scipio, being one day accused before the people of Rome of some crimes of a very high nature, instead of excusing himself or flattering his judges: "It will become you well," said he, "to sit in judgment upon a head, by whose means you have the power to judge all the world."[3] Another time, all the answer he gave to several impeachments brought against him by a tribune of the people, instead of making his defence: "Let us go, citizens," said he, "let us go render thanks to the gods for the victory they gave me over the Carthaginians as this day,"[4] and advancing himself before towards the Temple, he had presently all the assembly and his very accuser himself following at his heels. And Petilius, having been set on by Cato to demand an account of the money that had passed through his hands in the province of Antioch, Scipio being come into the senate to that purpose,

[1] "This is the highest revenge, that by its judgment no offender is absolved."—Juvenal, xiii. 2.

[2] "As a man's conscience is, so within hope or fear prevails, suiting to his design."—Ovid, *Fast.*, i. 485.

[3] Plutarch, *How Far a Man may Praise Himself*, c. 5.

[4] Valerius Maximus, iii. 7.

produced a book from under his robe, wherein he told them was an exact account of his receipts and disbursements; but being required to deliver it to the prothonotary to be examined, he refused, saying, he would not do himself so great a disgrace; and in the presence of the whole senate tore the book with his own hands to pieces.[1] I do not believe that the most seared conscience could have counterfeited so great an assurance. He had naturally too high a spirit and was accustomed to too high a fortune, says Titius Livius, to know how to be criminal, and to lower himself to the meanness of defending his innocence. The putting men to the rack is a dangerous invention, and seems to be rather a trial of patience than of truth. Both he who has the fortitude to endure it conceals the truth, and he who has not: for why should pain sooner make me confess what really is, than force me to say what is not? And, on the contrary, if he who is not guilty of that whereof he is accused, has the courage to undergo those torments, why should not he who is guilty have the same, so fair a reward as life being in his prospect? I believe the ground of this invention proceeds from the consideration of the force of conscience: for, to the guilty, it seems to assist the rack to make him confess his fault and to shake his resolution; and, on the other side, that it fortifies the innocent against the torture. But when all is done, 'tis, in plain truth, a trial full of uncertainty and danger: what would not a man say, what would not a man do, to avoid so intolerable torments?—

"Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor."[2]

[1] Livy, xxxviii. 54, 55.

[2] "Pain will make even the innocent lie."—Publius Syrus, *De Dolore*.

Whence it comes to pass, that him whom the judge has racked that he may not die innocent, he makes him die both innocent and racked. A thousand and a thousand have charged their own heads by false confessions, amongst whom I place Philotas, considering the circumstances of the trial Alexander put upon him and the progress of his torture.[1] But so it is that some say it is the least evil human weakness could invent; very inhumanly, notwithstanding, and to very little purpose, in my opinion.

Many nations less barbarous in this than the Greeks and Romans who call them so, repute it horrible and cruel to torment and pull a man to pieces for a fault of which they are yet in doubt. How can he help your ignorance? Are not you unjust, that, not to kill him without cause, do worse than kill him? And that this is so, do but observe how often men prefer to die without reason than undergo this examination, more painful than execution itself; and that oft-times by its extremity anticipates execution, and perform it. I know not where I had this story[2]: but it exactly matches the conscience of our justice in this particular. A country-woman, to a general of a very severe discipline,[3] accused one of his soldiers that he had taken from her children the little soup meat she had left to nourish them withal, the army having consumed all the rest; but of this proof there was none. The general, after having cautioned the woman to take good heed to what she said, for that she would make herself guilty of a false accusation if she told a lie, and she persisting, he

[1] Quintus Curtius, vi. 7.
[2] It is in Froissart, vol. iv., c. 87.
[3] Bajazet.

presently caused the soldier's belly to be ripped up to clear the truth of the fact, and the woman was found to be right. An instructive sentence.

CHAPTER VI

OF EXERCITATION

'Tis not to be expected that argument and instruction, though we never so voluntarily surrender our belief to what is read to us, should be of force to lead us on so far as to action, if we do not, over and above, exercise and form the soul by experience to the course for which we design it; it will, otherwise, doubtless find itself at a loss when it comes to the pinch of the business. This is the reason why those amongst the philosophers who were ambitious to attain to a greater excellence, were not contented to await the severities of fortune in the retirement and repose of their own habitations, lest he should have surprised them raw and inexpert in the combat, but sallied out to meet her, and purposely threw themselves into the proof of difficulties. Some of them abandoned riches to exercise themselves in a voluntary poverty; others sought out labour and an austerity of life, to inure them to hardships and inconveniences; others have deprived themselves of their dearest members, as of sight, and of the instruments of generation, lest their too delightful and effeminate service should soften and debauch the stability of their souls.

But in dying, which is the greatest work we have to do, practice can give us no assistance at all. A man may by custom fortify himself against pain, shame, necessity, and such-like accidents, but as

to death, we can experiment it but once, and are all apprentices when we come to it. There have, anciently, been men so excellent managers of their time that they have tried even in death itself to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost faculties of mind to discover what this passage is, but they are none of them come back to tell us the news :—

"Nec quisquam expergitus exstat,
Frigida quem semel est vitai pausa sequuta."[1]

Julius Canus,[2] a noble Roman, of singular constancy and virtue, having been condemned to die by that worthless fellow Caligula, besides many marvellous testimonies that he gave of his resolution, as he was just going to receive the stroke of the executioner, was asked by a philosopher, a friend of his: "Well, Canus, whereabout is your soul now? what is she doing? What are you thinking of?" "I was thinking," replied the other, "to keep myself ready, and the faculties of my mind full settled and fixed, to try if in this short and quick instant of death, I could perceive the motion of the soul when she parts from the body, and whether she has any sentiment at the separation, that I may after come again if I can, to acquaint my friends with it." This man philosophises not unto death only, but in death itself. What a strange assurance was this, and what bravery of courage, to desire his death should be a lesson to him, and to have leisure to think of other things in so great an affair :—

"Jus hoc animi morientis habebat."[3]

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[1] "No one wakes who has once fallen into the cold sleep of death."—Lucretius, iii. 942.

[2] See Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, c. 14. He was a Stoic.

[3] "This privilege of the dying he had."—Lucan, viii. 636.

And yet I fancy, there is a certain way of making it familiar to us, and in some sort of making trial what it is. We may gain experience, if not entire and perfect, yet such, at least, as shall not be totally useless to us, and that may render us more confident and more assured. If we cannot overtake it, we may approach it and view it, and if we do not advance so far as the fort, we may at least discover and make ourselves acquainted with the avenues. It is not without reason that we are taught to consider sleep as a resemblance of death: with how great facility do we pass from waking to sleeping, and with how little concern do we lose the knowledge of light and of ourselves. Peradventure, the faculty of sleeping would seem useless and contrary to nature, since it deprives us of all action and sentiment, were it not that by it nature instructs us that she has equally made us to die as to live; and in life presents to us the eternal state she reserves for us after it, to accustom us to it and to take from us the fear of it. But such as have by violent accident fallen into a swoon, and in it have lost all sense, these, methinks, have been very near seeing the true and natural face of death; for as to the moment of the passage, it is not to be feared that it brings with it any pain or displeasure, forasmuch as we can have no feeling without leisure; our sufferings require time, which in death is so short, and so precipitous, that it must necessarily be insensible. They are the approaches that we are to fear, and these may fall within the limits of experience.

Many things seem greater by imagination than they are in effect; I have passed a good part of my life in a perfect and entire health; I say, not only entire, but, moreover, sprightly and wanton. This state, so full of verdure, jollity, and vigour,

made the consideration of sickness so formidable to me, that when I came to experience it, I found the attacks faint and easy in comparison with what I had apprehended. Of this I have daily experience; if I am under the shelter of a warm room, in a stormy and tempestuous night, I wonder how people can live abroad, and am afflicted for those who are out in the fields: if I am there myself, I do not wish to be anywhere else. This one thing of being always shut up in a chamber I fancied insupportable: but I was presently inured to be so imprisoned a week, nay a month together, in a very weak, disordered, and sad condition; and I have found that, in the time of my health, I much more pitied the sick, than I think myself to be pitied when I am so, and that the force of my imagination enhances near one-half of the essence and reality of the thing. I hope that when I come to die I shall find it the same, and that, after all, it is not worth the pains I take, so much preparation and so much assistance as I call in, to undergo the stroke. But, at all events, we cannot give ourselves too much advantage.

In the time of our third or second troubles (I do not well remember which), going one day abroad to take the air, about a league from my own house, which is seated in the very centre of all the bustle and mischief of the late civil wars in France; thinking myself in all security and so near to my retreat that I stood in need of no better equipage, I had taken a horse that went very easy upon his pace, but was not very strong. Being upon my return home, a sudden occasion falling out to make use of this horse in a kind of service that he was not accustomed to, one of my train, a lusty, tall fellow, mounted upon a strong

German horse, that had a very ill mouth, fresh and vigorous, to play the brave and set on ahead of his fellows, comes thundering full speed in the very track where I was, rushing like a Colossus upon the little man and the little horse, with such a career of strength and weight, that he turned us both over and over, topsy-turvy with our heels in the air: so that there lay the horse overthrown and stunned with the fall, and I ten or twelve paces from him stretched out at length, with my face all battered and broken, my sword which I had had in my hand, above ten paces beyond that, and my belt broken all to pieces, without motion or sense any more than a stock. 'Twas the only swoon I was ever in till that hour in my life. Those who were with me, after having used all the means they could to bring me to myself, concluding me dead, took me up in their arms, and carried me with very much difficulty home to my house, which was about half a French league from thence. On the way, having been for more than two hours given over for a dead man, I began to move and to fetch my breath; for so great abundance of blood was fallen into my stomach, that nature had need to rouse her forces to discharge it. They then raised me upon my feet, where I threw off a whole bucket of clots of blood, as this I did also several times by the way. This gave me so much ease, that I began to recover a little life, but so leisurely and by so small advances, that my first sentiments were much nearer the approaches of death than life:—

> "Perchè, dubbiosa ancor del suo ritorno,
> Non s'assicura attonita la mente."[1]

[1] "For the soul, doubtful as to its return, could not compose itself."—Tasso, *Gierus. Lib.*, xii. 74.

The remembrance of this accident, which is very well imprinted in my memory, so naturally representing to me the image and idea of death, has in some sort reconciled me to that untoward adventure. When I first began to open my eyes, it was with so perplexed, so weak and dead a sight, that I could yet distinguish nothing but only discern the light:—

"Come quel ch'or apre, or'chiude
Gli occhi, mezzo tra'l sonno è l'esser desto."[1]

As to the functions of the soul, they advanced with the same pace and measure with those of the body. I saw myself all bloody, my doublet being stained all over with the blood I had vomited. The first thought that came into my mind was, that I had a harquebuss shot in my head, and, indeed, at the time there were a great many fired round about us. Methought my life but just hung upon my lips: and I shut my eyes, to help, methought, to thrust it out, and took a pleasure in languishing and letting myself go. It was an imagination that only superficially floated upon my soul, as tender and weak as all the rest, but really, not only exempt from anything displeasing, but mixed with that sweetness that people feel when they glide into a slumber.

I believe it is the very same condition those people are in, whom we see swoon with weakness in the agony of death; and I am of opinion that we pity them without cause, supposing them agitated with grievous dolours, or that their souls suffer under painful thoughts. It has ever been my belief, contrary to the opinion of many, and

[1] "As a man that now opens, now shuts his eyes, between sleep and waking."—Tasso, *Gierus. Lib.*, viii., 26.

particularly of La Boetie, that those whom we see so subdued and stupefied at the approaches of their end, or oppressed with the length of the disease, or by accident of an apoplexy or falling sickness :—

> "Vi morbi sæpe coactus
> Ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
> Concidit, et spumas agit ; ingemit, et tremit artus ;
> Desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat,
> Inconstanter, et in jactando membra fatigat"[1] ;

or hurt in the head, whom we hear to mutter, and by fits to utter grievous groans ; though we gather from these signs by which it seems as if they had some remains of consciousness, and that there are movements of the body ; I have always believed, I say, both the body and the soul benumbed and asleep,

> "Vivit, et est vitæ nescius ipse suæ,"[2]

and could not believe that in so great a stupefaction of the members and so great a defection of the senses, the soul could maintain any force within to take cognisance of herself, and that, therefore, they had no tormenting reflections to make them consider and be sensible of the misery of their condition, and consequently were not much to be pitied.

I can, for my part, think of no state so insupportable and dreadful, as to have the soul vivid and afflicted, without means to declare itself ; as one should say of such as are sent to execution with their tongues first cut out (were it not that in

[1] "Often, compelled by the force of disease, some one as thunderstruck falls under our eyes, and foams, groans, and trembles, stretches, twists, breathes irregularly, and in paroxysms wears out his strength." —Lucretius, iii. 485.

[2] "He lives, and does not know that he is alive."—Ovid, *Trist.*, i. 3, 12.

this kind of dying, the most silent seems to me the most graceful, if accompanied with a grave and constant countenance); or if those miserable prisoners, who fall into the hands of the base hangman soldiers of this age, by whom they are tormented with all sorts of inhuman usage to compel them to some excessive and impossible ransom; kept, in the meantime, in such condition and place, where they have no means of expressing or signifying their thoughts and their misery. The poets have feigned some gods who favour the deliverance of such as suffer under a languishing death:—

"Hunc ego Diti
Sacrum jussa fero, teque isto corpore solvo"[1];

both the interrupted words, and the short and irregular answers one gets from them sometimes, by bawling and keeping a clutter about them; or the motions which seem to yield some consent to what we would have them do, are no testimony, nevertheless, that they live, an entire life at least. So it happens to us in the yawning of sleep, before it has fully possessed us, to perceive, as in a dream, what is done about us, and to follow the last things that are said with a perplexed and uncertain hearing which seems but to touch upon the borders of the soul; and to make answers to the last words that have been spoken to us, which have more in them of chance than sense.

Now seeing I have in effect tried it, I have no doubt but I have hitherto made a right judgment; for first, being in a swoon, I laboured to rip open the buttons of my doublet with my nails, for my

[1] "I bidden offer this sacred thing to Pluto, and from that body dismiss thee."—*Æneid*, iv. 782.

sword was gone; and yet I felt nothing in my imagination that hurt me; for we have many motions in us that do not proceed from our direction:—

"Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant"[1];

so falling people extend their arms before them by a natural impulse, which prompts our limbs to offices and motions without any commission from our reason:

"Falciferos memorant currus abscindere membra . . .
Ut tremere in terrâ videatur ab artubus id quod
Decidit abscissum; cum mens tamen atque hominis vis
Mobilitate mali, non quit sentire dolorem."[2]

My stomach was so oppressed with the coagulated blood, that my hands moved to that part, of their own voluntary motion, as they frequently do to the part that itches, without being directed by our will. There are several animals, and even men, in whom one may perceive the muscles to stir and tremble after they are dead. Every one experimentally knows that there are some members which grow stiff and flag without his leave. Now, those passions which only touch the outward bark of us, cannot be said to be ours: to make them so, there must be a concurrence of the whole man; and the pains which are felt by the hand or the foot while we are sleeping, are none of ours.

As I drew near my own house, where the alarm of my fall was already got before me, and my family were come out to meet me, with the hubbub usual

[1] "Half-dead fingers grope about, and grasp again the sword."—*Æneid*, x. 396.

[2] "They relate that scythe-bearing chariots mow off limbs, so that they quiver on the ground; and yet the mind of him from whom the limb is taken by the swiftness of the blow feels no pain."—Lucretius, iii. 642.

in such cases, not only did I make some little answer to some questions which were asked me; but they moreover tell me, that I was sufficiently collected to order them to bring a horse to my wife whom I saw struggling and tiring herself on the road, which is hilly and rugged.[1] This consideration should seem to proceed from a soul that retained its functions; but it was nothing so with me. I knew not what I said or did, and they were nothing but idle thoughts in the clouds, that were stirred up by the senses of the eyes and ears, and proceeded not from me. I knew not for all that, whence I came or whither I went, neither was I capable to weigh and consider what was said to me: these were light effects, that the senses produced of themselves as of custom; what the soul contributed was in a dream, lightly touched, licked and bedewed by the soft impression of the senses. Notwithstanding, my condition was, in truth, very easy and quiet; I had no affliction upon me, either for others or myself; it was an extreme languor and weakness, without any manner of pain. I saw my own house, but knew it not. When they had put me to bed I found an inexpressible sweetness in that repose; for I had been desperately tugged and lugged by those poor people who had taken the pains to carry me upon their arms a very great and a very rough way, and had in so doing all quite tired out themselves, twice or thrice one after another. They offered me several remedies, but I would take none, certainly believing that I was mortally wounded in the head. And, in earnest, it had been a very happy death, for the weakness

[1] Which Cotton thus singularly renders: "I had so much sense, as to order that a horse I saw trip and falter in the way, which is mountainous and uneasy, should be given to my wife." And he is followed by Coste.

of my understanding deprived me of the faculty of discerning, and that of my body of the sense of feeling; I was suffering myself to glide away so sweetly and after so soft and easy a manner, that I scarce find any other action less troublesome than that was. But when I came again to myself and to resume my faculties:—

"Ut tandem sensus convaluere mei,"[1]

which was two or three hours after, I felt myself on a sudden involved in terrible pain, having my limbs battered and ground with my fall, and was so ill for two or three nights after, that I thought I was once more dying again, but a more painful death, having concluded myself as good as dead before, and to this hour am sensible of the bruises of that terrible shock. I will not here omit, that the last thing I could make them beat into my head, was the memory of this accident, and I had it over and over again repeated to me, whither I was going, from whence I came, and at what time of the day this mischance befell me, before I could comprehend it. As to the manner of my fall, that was concealed from me in favour to him who had been the occasion, and other flim-flams were invented. But a long time after, and the very next day that my memory began to return and to represent to me the state wherein I was, at the instant that I perceived this horse coming full drive upon me (for I had seen him at my heels, and gave myself for gone, but this thought had been so sudden, that fear had had no leisure to introduce itself) it seemed to me like a flash of lightning that had pierced my soul, and that I came from the other world.

[1] "When at length my lost senses again returned."—Ovid, *Trist.*, i. 3, 24.

This long story of so light an accident would appear vain enough, were it not for the knowledge I have gained by it for my own use; for I do really find, that to get acquainted with death, needs no more but nearly to approach it. Every one, as Pliny says,[1] is a good doctrine to himself, provided he be capable of discovering himself near at hand. Here, this is not my doctrine, 'tis my study; and is not the lesson of another, but my own; and if I communicate it, it ought not to be ill taken, for that which is of use to me, may also, peradventure, be useful to another. As to the rest, I spoil nothing, I make use of nothing but my own; and if I play the fool, 'tis at my own expense, and nobody else is concerned in't; for 'tis a folly that will die with me, and that no one is to inherit. We hear but of two or three of the ancients,[2] who have beaten this path, and yet I cannot say if it was after this manner, knowing no more of them but their names. No one since has followed the track: 'tis a rugged road, more so than it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain, as that of the soul; to penetrate the dark profundities of its intricate internal windings; to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions; 'tis a new and extraordinary undertaking, and that withdraws us from the common and most recommended employments of the world. 'Tis now many years since that my thoughts have had no other aim and level than myself, and that I have only pried into and studied myself: or, if I study any other thing, 'tis to apply it to or rather in myself. And yet I do not think it a fault, if, as others do by other much

[1] *Nat. Hist.*, xxii. 24.

[2] As Archilochus and Alcæus among the Greeks, and Lucullus among the Romans.—Coste.

less profitable sciences, I communicate what I have learned in this, though I am not very well pleased with my own progress. There is no description so difficult, nor doubtless of so great utility, as that of a man's self: and withal, a man must curl his hair and set out and adjust himself, to appear in public: now I am perpetually tricking myself out, for I am eternally upon my own description. Custom has made all speaking of a man's self vicious, and positively interdicts it, in hatred to the boasting that seems inseparable from the testimony men give of themselves :—

"In vitium ducit culpæ fuga."[1]

Instead of blowing the child's nose, this is to take his nose off altogether. I think the remedy worse than the disease. But, allowing it to be true that it must of necessity be presumption to entertain people with discourses of one's self, I ought not, pursuing my general design, to forbear an action that publishes this infirmity of mine, nor conceal the fault which I not only practise but profess. Notwithstanding, to speak my thought freely, I think that the custom of condemning wine, because some people will be drunk, is itself to be condemned; a man cannot abuse anything but what is good in itself; and I believe that this rule has only regard to the popular vice. They are bits for calves, with which neither the saints whom we hear speak so highly of themselves, nor the philosophers, nor the divines will be curbed; neither will I, who am as little the one as the other. If they do not write of it expressly, at all events, when the occasions arise, they don't hesitate to put themselves on

[1] "The escape from a fault leads into a vice."—Horace, *De Arte Poeticâ*, verse 31.

the public highway. Of what does Socrates treat more largely than of himself? To what does he more direct and address the discourses of his disciples, than to speak of themselves, not of the lesson in their book, but of the essence and motion of their souls? We confess ourselves religiously to God and our confessor; as our neighbours[1] do to all the people. But some will answer that we there speak nothing but accusation against ourselves; why then, we say all; for our very virtue itself is faulty and penetrable. My trade and art is to live; he that forbids me to speak according to my own sense, experience, and practice, may as well enjoin an architect not to speak of building according to his own knowledge, but according to that of his neighbour; according to the knowledge of another, and not according to his own. If it be vainglory for a man to publish his own virtues, why does not Cicero prefer the eloquence of Hortensius, and Hortensius that of Cicero? Peradventure they mean that I should give testimony of myself by works and effects, not barely by words. I chiefly paint my thoughts, a subject void of form and incapable of operative production; 'tis all that I can do to couch it in this airy body of the voice; the wisest and devoutest men have lived in the greatest care to avoid all apparent effects. Effects would more speak of fortune than of me; they manifest their own office and not mine, but uncertainly and by conjecture; patterns of some one particular virtue. I expose myself entire; 'tis a body where, at one view, the veins, muscles, and tendons are apparent, every of them in its proper place; here the effects of a cold; there of the heart beating, very dubiously. I do not write my own acts, but myself and my essence.

[1] The Protestants.

I am of opinion that a man must be very cautious how he values himself, and equally conscientious to give a true report, be it better or worse, impartially. If I thought myself perfectly good and wise, I would rattle it out to some purpose. To speak less of one's self than what one really is is folly, not modesty; and to take that for current pay which is under a man's value is pusillanimity and cowardice, according to Aristotle.[1] No virtue assists itself with falsehood; truth is never matter of error. To speak more of one's self than is really true is not always mere presumption; 'tis, moreover, very often folly; to be immeasurably pleased with what one is, and to fall into an indiscreet self-love, is in my opinion the substance of this vice. The most sovereign remedy to cure it, is to do quite contrary to what these people direct who, in forbidding men to speak of themselves, consequently, at the same time, interdict thinking of themselves too. Pride dwells in the thought; the tongue can have but a very little share in it.

They fancy that to think of one's self is to be delighted with one's self; to frequent and converse with one's self, to be over-indulgent; but this excess springs only in those who take but a superficial view of themselves, and dedicate their main inspection to their affairs; who call it mere reverie and idleness to occupy one's self with one's self, and the building one's self up a mere building of castles in the air; who look upon themselves as a third person only, a stranger. If any one be in rapture with his own knowledge, looking only on those below him, let him but turn his eye upward towards past ages, and his pride will be abated, when he shall there find so many thousand wits

[1] *Nichom. Ethics*, iv. 7.

that trample him under foot. If he enter into a flattering presumption of his personal valour, let him but recollect the lives of Scipio, Epaminondas; so many armies, so many nations, that leave him so far behind them. No particular quality can make any man proud, that will at the same time put the many other weak and imperfect ones he has in the other scale, and the nothingness of human condition to make up the weight. Because Socrates had alone digested to purpose the precept of his god, "to know himself," and by that study arrived at the perfection of setting himself at nought, he only was reputed worthy the title of a sage. Whosoever shall so know himself, let him boldly speak it out.

CHAPTER VII

OF RECOMPENSES OF HONOUR

THEY who write the life of Augustus Cæsar,[1] observe this in his military discipline, that he was wonderfully liberal of gifts to men of merit, but that as to the true recompenses of honour he was as sparing; yet he himself had been gratified by his uncle with all the military recompenses before he had ever been in the field. It was a pretty invention, and received into most governments of the world, to institute certain vain and in themselves valueless distinctions to honour and recompense virtue, such as the crowns of laurel, oak, and myrtle, the particular fashion of some garment, the privilege to ride in a coach in the city, or at night with a torch, some peculiar place assigned in public assemblies, the prerogative of certain additional

[1] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, c. 25.

names and titles, certain distinctions in the bearing of coats of arms, and the like, the use of which, according to the several humours of nations, has been variously received, and yet continues.

We in France, as also several of our neighbours, have orders of knighthood that are instituted only for this end. And 'tis, in earnest, a very good and profitable custom to find out an acknowledgment for the worth of rare and excellent men, and to satisfy them with rewards that are not at all chargeable either to prince or people. And that which has always been found by ancient experience, and which we have heretofore observed among ourselves, that men of quality have ever been more jealous of such recompenses than of those wherein there was gain and profit, is not without very good ground and reason. If with the reward, which ought to be simply a recompense of honour, they should mix other commodities and add riches, this mixture, instead of procuring an increase of estimation, would debase and abate it. The Order of St. Michael, which has been so long in repute amongst us, had no greater commodity than that it had no communication with any other commodity, which produced this effect, that formerly there was no office or title whatever to which the gentry pretended with so great desire and affection as they did to that; no quality that carried with it more respect and grandeur, valour and worth more willingly embracing and with greater ambition aspiring to a recompense purely its own, and rather glorious than profitable. For, in truth, other gifts have not so great a dignity of usage, by reason they are laid out upon all sorts of occasions; with money a man pays the wages of a servant, the diligence of a courier, dancing, vaulting, speaking, and the meanest offices

we receive; nay, and reward vice with it too, as flattery, treachery, and pimping; and therefore 'tis no wonder if virtue less desires and less willingly receives this common sort of payment, than that which is proper and peculiar to her, throughout generous and noble. Augustus had reason to be more sparing of this than the other, insomuch that honour is a privilege which derives its principal essence from rarity; and so virtue itself:—

"Cui malus est nemo, quis bonus esse potest?"[1]

We do not intend it for a commendation when we say that such a one is careful in the education of his children, by reason it is a common act, how just and well done soever; no more than we commend a great tree, where the whole forest is the same. I do not think that any citizen of Sparta glorified himself much upon his valour, it being the universal virtue of the whole nation; and as little upon his fidelity and contempt of riches. There is no recompense becomes virtue, how great soever, that is once passed into a custom; and I know not withal whether we can ever call it great, being common.

Seeing, then, that these remunerations of honour have no other value and estimation but only this, that few people enjoy them, 'tis but to be liberal of them to bring them down to nothing. And though there should be now more men found than in former times worthy of our order,[2] the estimation of it nevertheless should not be abated, nor the honour made cheap; and it may easily happen that more may merit it; for there is no virtue that so easily spreads as that of military valour. There

[1] "To whom no one is ill who can be good?"—Martial, xii. 82.
[2] Montaigne was of the Order of St. Michel.

is another virtue, true, perfect, and philosophical, of which I do not speak, and only make use of the word in our common acceptation, much greater than this and more full, which is a force and assurance of the soul, equally despising all sorts of adverse accidents, equable, uniform, and constant, of which ours is no more than one little ray. Use, education, example, and custom can do all in all to the establishment of that whereof I am speaking, and with great facility render it common, as by the experience of our civil wars is manifest enough; and whoever could at this time unite us all, Catholic and Huguenot, into one body, and set us upon some brave common enterprise, we should again make our ancient military reputation flourish. It is most certain that in times past the recompense of this order had not only a regard to valour, but had a further prospect; it never was the reward of a valiant soldier but of a great captain; the science of obeying was not reputed worthy of so honourable a guerdon. There was therein a more universal military expertness required, and that comprehended the most and the greatest qualities of a military man:—

"Neque enim eædem militares et imperatoriæ artes sunt,"[1]

as also, besides, a condition suitable to such a dignity. But, I say, though more men were worthy than formerly, yet ought it not to be more liberally distributed, and it were better to fall short in not giving it at all to whom it should be due, than for ever to lose, as we have lately done, the fruit of so profitable an invention. No man of spirit will deign to advantage himself with what is in common

[1] "For the arts of soldiery and generalship are not the same."—Livy, xxv. 19.

with many; and such of the present time as have least merited this recompense themselves make the greater show of disdaining it, in order thereby to be ranked with those to whom so much wrong has been done by the unworthy conferring and debasing the distinction which was their particular right.

Now, to expect that in obliterating and abolishing this, suddenly to create and bring into credit a like institution, is not a proper attempt for so licentious and so sick a time as this wherein we now are; and it will fall out that the last will from its birth incur the same inconveniences that have ruined the other.[1] The rules for dispensing this new order had need to be extremely clipt and bound under great restrictions, to give it authority; and this tumultuous season is incapable of such a curb: besides that, before this can be brought into repute, 'tis necessary that the memory of the first, and of the contempt into which it is fallen, be buried in oblivion.

This place might naturally enough admit of some discourse upon the consideration of valour, and the difference of this virtue from others; but, Plutarch having so often handled this subject, I should give myself an unnecessary trouble to repeat what he has said. But this is worth considering: that our nation places valour, *vaillance*, in the highest degree of virtue, as its very word evidences, being derived from *valeur*, and that, according to our use, when we say a man of high worth—a good man in our court style—'tis to say a valiant man, after the Roman way; for the general appellation of virtue with them takes etymology from *vis*, force. The proper, sole, and essential profession of the French noblesse is that of arms: and 'tis likely that the

[1] Montaigne refers to the Order of the Saint-Esprit, instituted by Henry III. in 1578.

first virtue that discovered itself amongst men and has given to some advantage over others, was that by which the strongest and most valiant have mastered the weaker, and acquired a particular authority and reputation, whence came to it that dignified appellation; or else, that these nations, being very warlike, gave the pre-eminence to that of the virtues which was most familiar to them; just as our passion and the feverish solicitude we have of the chastity of women occasions that to say, a good woman, a woman of worth, a woman of honour and virtue, signifies merely a chaste woman: as if, to oblige them to that one duty, we were indifferent as to all the rest, and gave them the reins in all other faults whatever to compound for that one of incontinence.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE AFFECTION OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN

To Madame D'Estissac.[1]

Madam, if the strangeness and novelty of my subject, which are wont to give value to things, do not save me, I shall never come off with honour from this foolish attempt: but 'tis so fantastic, and carries a face so unlike the common use, that this, peradventure, may make it pass. 'Tis a melancholic humour, and consequently a humour very much an enemy to my natural complexion, engendered by the pensiveness of the solitude into which for some years past I have retired myself, that first put into

[1] The mother of one of the gentlemen who accompanied Montaigne to Italy in 1580.

my head this idle fancy of writing. Wherein, finding myself totally unprovided and empty of other matter, I presented myself to myself for argument and subject. 'Tis the only book in the world of its kind, and of a wild and extravagant design. There is nothing worth remark in this affair but that extravagancy: for in a subject so vain and frivolous, the best workman in the world could not have given it a form fit to recommend it to any manner of esteem.

Now, madam, having to draw my own picture to the life, I had omitted one important feature, had I not therein represented the honour I have ever had for you and your merits; which I have purposely chosen to say in the beginning of this chapter, by reason that amongst the many other excellent qualities you are mistress of, that of the tender love you have manifested to your children, is seated in one of the highest places. Whoever knows at what age Monsieur D'Estissac, your husband, left you a widow, the great and honourable matches that have since been offered to you, as many as to any lady of your condition in France, the constancy and steadiness wherewith, for so many years, you have sustained so many sharp difficulties, the burden and conduct of affairs, which have persecuted you in every corner of the kingdom, and are not yet weary of tormenting you, and the happy direction you have given to all these, by your sole prudence or good fortune, will easily conclude with me that we have not so vivid an example as yours of maternal affection in our times. I praise God, madam, that it has been so well employed; for the great hopes Monsieur D'Estissac, your son, gives of himself, render sufficient assurance that when he comes of age you will reap from him all the

obedience and gratitude of a very good man. But, forasmuch as by reason of his tender years, he has not been capable of taking notice of those offices of extremest value he has in so great number received from you, I will, if these papers shall one day happen to fall into his hands, when I shall neither have mouth nor speech left to deliver it to him, that he shall receive from me a true account of those things, which shall be more effectually manifested to him by their own effects, by which he will understand that there is not a gentleman in France who stands more indebted to a mother's care; and that he cannot, in the future, give a better nor more certain testimony of his own worth and virtue than by acknowledging you for that excellent mother you are.

If there be any law truly natural, that is to say, any instinct that is seen universally and perpetually imprinted in both beasts and men (which is not without controversy), I can say, that in my opinion, next to the care every animal has of its own preservation, and to avoid that which may hurt him, the affection that the begetter bears to his offspring holds the second place in this rank. And seeing that nature appears to have recommended it to us, having regard to the extension and progression of the successive pieces of this machine of hers, 'tis no wonder if, on the contrary, that of children towards their parents is not so great. To which we may add this other Aristotelian consideration,[1] that he who confers a benefit on any one, loves him better than he is beloved by him again: that he to whom is owing, loves better than he who owes; and that every artificer is fonder of his work, than, if that work had sense, it would be of him; by

[1] *Nichom. Ethics.*

reason that it is dear to us *to be*, and *to be* consists in movement and action; therefore every one has in some sort a being in his work. He who confers a benefit exercises a fine and honest action; he who receives it exercises the useful only. Now the useful is much less lovable than the honest; the honest is stable and permanent, supplying him who has done it with a continual gratification. The useful loses itself, easily slides away, and the memory of it is neither so fresh nor so pleasing. Those things are dearest to us that have cost us most, and giving is more chargeable than receiving.

Since it has pleased God to endue us with some capacity of reason, to the end we may not, like brutes, be servilely subject and enslaved to the laws common to both, but that we should by judgment and a voluntary liberty apply ourselves to them, we ought, indeed, something to yield to the simple authority of nature, but not suffer ourselves to be tyrannically hurried away and transported by her; reason alone should have the conduct of our inclinations. I, for my part, have a strange disgust for those propensions that are started in us without the mediation and direction of the judgment, as, upon the subject I am speaking of, I cannot entertain that passion of dandling and caressing infants scarcely born, having as yet neither motion of soul nor shape of body distinguishable, by which they can render themselves amiable, and have not willingly suffered them to be nursed near me. A true and regular affection ought to spring and increase with the knowledge they give us of themselves, and then, if they are worthy of it, the natural propension walking hand in hand with reason, to cherish them with a truly paternal love; and so to judge, also, if they be otherwise, still

rendering ourselves to reason, notwithstanding the inclination of nature. 'Tis oft-times quite otherwise; and, most commonly, we find ourselves more taken with the running up and down, the games, and puerile simplicities of our children, than we do, afterwards, with their most complete actions; as if we had loved them for our sport, like monkeys, and not as men; and some there are, who are very liberal in buying them balls to play withal, who are very close-handed for the least necessary expense when they come to age. Nay, it looks as if the jealousy of seeing them appear in and enjoy the world when we are about to leave it, rendered us more niggardly and stingy towards them; it vexes us that they tread upon our heels, as if to solicit us to go out; if this were to be feared, since the order of things will have it so that they cannot, to speak the truth, be nor live, but at the expense of our being and life, we should never meddle with being fathers at all.

For my part, I think it cruelty and injustice not to receive them into the share and society of our goods, and not to make them partakers in the intelligence of our domestic affairs when they are capable, and not to lessen and contract our own expenses to make the more room for theirs, seeing we beget them to that effect. 'Tis unjust that an old fellow, broken and half dead, should alone, in a corner of the chimney, enjoy the money that would suffice for the maintenance and advancement of many children, and suffer them, in the meantime, to lose their best years for want of means to advance themselves in the public service and the knowledge of men. A man by this course drives them to dispair, and to seek out by any means, how unjust or dishonourable soever, to provide for their own support: as I have, in my

time, seen several young men of good extraction so addicted to stealing, that no correction could cure them of it. I know one of a very good family, to whom, at the request of a brother of his, a very honest and brave gentleman, I once spoke on this account, who made answer, and confessed to me roundly, that he had been put upon this paltry practice by the severity and avarice of his father; but that he was now so accustomed to it he could not leave it off. And, at that very time, he was trapped stealing a lady's rings, having come into her chamber, as she was dressing with several others. He put me in mind of a story I had heard of another gentleman, so perfect and accomplished in this fine trade in his youth, that, after he came to his estate and resolved to give it over, he could not hold his hands, nevertheless, if he passed by a shop where he saw anything he liked, from catching it up, though it put him to the shame of sending afterwards to pay for it. And I have myself seen several so habituated to this quality that even amongst their comrades they could not forbear filching, though with intent to restore what they had taken. I am a Gascon, and yet there is no vice I so little understand as that; I hate it something more by disposition than I condemn it by reason; I do not so much as desire anything of another man's. This province of ours is, in plain truth, a little more decried than the other parts of the kingdom; and yet we have several times seen, in our times, men of good families of other provinces, in the hands of justice, convicted of abominable thefts. I fear this vice is, in some sort, to be attributed to the fore-mentioned vice of the fathers.[1]

[1] This kleptomania is still common enough among both sexes, and is practised by noble lords and ladies. How far it is traceable to heredity, I scarcely know.

And if a man should tell me, as a lord of very good understanding once did, that "he hoarded up wealth, not to extract any other fruit and use from his parsimony, but to make himself honoured and sought after by his relations; and that age having deprived him of all other power, it was the only remaining remedy to maintain his authority in his family, and to keep him from being neglected and despised by all around," in truth, not only old age, but all other imbecility, according to Aristotle,[1] is the promoter of avarice; that is something, but it is physic for a disease that a man should prevent the birth of. A father is very miserable who has no other hold on his children's affection than the need they have of his assistance, if that can be called affection; he must render himself worthy to be respected by his virtue and wisdom, and beloved by his kindness and the sweetness of his manners; even the very ashes of a rich matter have their value; and we are wont to have the bones and relics of worthy men in regard and reverence. No old age can be so decrepid in a man who has passed his life in honour, but it must be venerable, especially to his children, whose soul he must have trained up to their duty by reason, not by necessity and the need they have of him, nor by harshness and compulsion:—

> "Et errat longe meâ quidem sententiâ
> Qui imperium credat esse gravius, aut stabilius,
> Vi quod fit, quam illud, quod amicitia adjungitur."[2]

I condemn all violence in the education of a tender soul that is designed for honour and liberty.

[1] *Nichom. Ethics.*

[2] "He wanders far from the truth, in my opinion, who thinks that government more absolute and durable which is acquired by force than that which is attached to friendship."—Terence, *Adelph.*, i. 1, 40.

There is I know not what of servile in rigour and constraint; and I am of opinion that what is not to be done by reason, prudence, and address, is never to be affected by force. I myself was brought up after that manner; and they tell me that in all my first age I never felt the rod but twice, and then very slightly. I practised the same method with my children, who all of them died at nurse, except Leonora, my only daughter, and who arrived to the age of five years and upward without other correction for her childish faults (her mother's indulgence easily concurring) than words only, and those very gentle; in which kind of proceeding, though my end and expectation should be both frustrated, there are other causes enough to lay the fault on without blaming my discipline, which I know to be natural and just, and I should, in this, have yet been more religious towards the males, as less born to subjection and more free; and I should have made it my business to fill their hearts with ingenuousness and freedom. I have never observed other effects of whipping than to render boys more cowardly, or more wilfully obstinate.

Do we desire to be beloved of our children? Will we remove from them all occasion of wishing our death though no occasion of so horrid a wish can either be just or excusable?—

"Nullum scelus rationem habet."[1]

Let us reasonably accommodate their lives with what is in our power. In order to this, we should not marry so young that our age shall in a manner be confounded with theirs; for this inconvenience plunges us into many very great difficulties, and especially the gentry of the nation, who are of a

[1] "No wickedness has reason."—Livy, xxviii. 28.

condition wherein they have little to do, and who live upon their rents only: for elsewhere, with people who live by their labour, the plurality and company of children is an increase to the common stock; they are so many new tools and instruments wherewith to grow rich.

I married at three-and-thirty years of age, and concur in the opinion of thirty-five, which is said to be that of Aristotle.[1] Plato will have nobody marry before thirty; but he has reason to laugh at those who undertook the work of marriage after five-and-fifty, and condemns their offspring as unworthy of aliment and life. Thales gave the truest limits, who, young and being importuned by his mother to marry, answered, "That it was too soon," and, being grown into years and urged again, "That it was too late."[2] A man must deny opportunity to every inopportune action. The ancient Gauls[3] looked upon it as a very horrid thing for a man to have society with a woman before he was twenty years of age, and strictly recommended to the men who designed themselves for war the keeping their virginity till well grown in years, forasmuch as courage is abated and diverted by intercourse with women:—

> "Mà, or congiunto à giovinetta sposa,
> E lieto omai de' figli, era invilito
> Negli affetti di padre et di marito."[4]

Muley Hassam, king of Tunis, he whom the Emperor Charles V. restored to his kingdom,

[1] "Aristotle, *Politics*, vii. 16, says thirty-seven, not thirty-five."—Coste.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales*, i. 26.

[3] Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi. 21, who, however, says this not of the Gauls, but of the Germans.

[4] "Now, married to a young wife and happy in children, he was demoralised by his love as father and husband."—Tasso, *Gierus.*, x. 39.

reproached the memory of his father Mahomet with the frequentation of women, styling him loose, effeminate, and a getter of children.[1] The Greek history observes of Iccus the Tarentine, of Chryso, Astyllus, Diopompos, and others, that to keep their bodies in order for the Olympic games and such like exercises, they denied themselves during that preparation all commerce with Venus.[2] In a certain country of the Spanish Indies men were not permitted to marry till after forty years of age,[3] and yet the girls were allowed to marry at ten. 'Tis not time for a gentleman of five-and-thirty years old to give place to his son who is twenty; he is himself in a condition to serve both in the expeditions of war and in the court of his prince; has need of all his appurtenances; and yet, doubtless, he ought to surrender a share, but not so great an one as to forget himself for others; and for such an one the answer that fathers have ordinarily in their mouths, "I will not put off my clothes, before I go to bed," serves well.[4]

But a father worn out with age and infirmities, and deprived by weakness and want of health of the common society of men, wrongs himself and his to amass a great heap of treasure. He has lived long enough, if he be wise, to have a mind to strip himself to go to bed, not to his very shirt, I confess, but to that and a good, warm dressing-gown; the remaining pomps, of which he has no further use, he ought voluntarily to surrender to those, to whom by the order of nature

[1] Of whom he had thirty-four.

[2] Plato, *De Leg.*, viii.

[3] It used to be a frequent practice in Scotland to defer marriage to this age, the country being poor, and a man being unable, till he had reached that time of life, to support a household.

[4] Comp. i. xxxviii.-xxxix.

they belong. 'Tis reason he should refer the use of those things to them, seeing that nature has reduced him to such a state that he cannot enjoy them himself; otherwise there is doubtless malice and envy in the case. The greatest act of the Emperor Charles V. was that when, in imitation of some of the ancients of his own quality, confessing it but reason to strip ourselves when our clothes encumber and grow too heavy for us, and to lie down when our legs begin to fail us, he resigned his possessions, grandeur, and power to his son, when he found himself failing in vigour, and steadiness for the conduct of his affairs suitable with the glory he had therein acquired:—

> "Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
> Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat."[1]

This fault of not perceiving betimes and of not being sensible of the feebleness and extreme alteration that age naturally brings both upon body and mind, which, in my opinion, is equal, if indeed the soul has not more than half, has lost the reputation of most of the great men in the world. I have known in my time, and been intimately acquainted with persons of great authority, whom one might easily discern marvellously lapsed from the sufficiency I knew they were once endued with, by the reputation they had acquired in their former years, whom I could heartily, for their own sakes, have wished at home at their ease, discharged of their public or military employments, which were now grown too heavy for their shoulders. I have formerly been very familiar in a gentleman's house, a widower and very old, though healthy

[1] "Dismiss the old horse in good time, lest, failing in the lists, the spectators laugh."—Horace, *Epist.*, i., 1, 8.

and cheerful enough: this gentleman had several daughters to marry and a son already of ripe age, which brought upon him many visitors, and a great expense, neither of which well pleased him, not only out of consideration of frugality, but yet more for having, by reason of his age, entered into a course of life far differing from ours. I told him one day a little boldly, as I used to do, that he would do better to give us younger folk room, and to leave his principal house (for he had but that well placed and furnished) to his son, and himself retire to an estate he had hard by, where nobody would trouble his repose, seeing he could not otherwise avoid being importuned by us, the condition of his children considered. He took my advice afterwards, and found an advantage in so doing.

I do not mean that a man should so instal them as not to reserve to himself a liberty to retract; I, who am now arrived to the age wherein such things are fit to be done, would resign to them the enjoyment of my house and goods, but with a power of revocation if they should give me cause to alter my mind; I would leave to them the use, that being no longer convenient for me; and, of the general authority and power over all, would reserve as much as I thought good to myself; having always held that it must needs be a great satisfaction to an aged father himself to put his children into the way of governing his affairs, and to have power during his own life to control their behaviour, supplying them with instruction and advice from his own experience, and himself to transfer the ancient honour and order of his house into the hands of those who are to succeed him, and by that means to satisfy himself as to the

hopes he may conceive of their future conduct. And in order to this I would not avoid their company; I would observe them near at hand, and partake, according to the condition of my age, of their feasts and jollities. If I did not live absolutely amongst them, which I could not do without annoying them and their friends, by reason of the morosity of my age and the restlessness of my infirmities, and without violating also the rules and order of living I should then have set down to myself, I would, at least, live near them in some retired part of my house, not the best in show, but the most commodious. Nor as I saw, some years ago, a dean of St. Hilary of Poitiers, by his melancholy given up to such a solitude, that at the time I came into his chamber it had been two and twenty years that he had not stepped one foot out of it, and yet had all his motions free and easy, and was in good health, saving a cold that fell upon his lungs; he would, hardly once in a week, suffer any one to come in to see him; he always kept himself shut up in his chamber alone, except that a servant brought him, once a day, something to eat, and did then but just come in and go out again. His employment was to walk up and down, and read some book, for he was a bit of a scholar; but, as to the rest, obstinately bent to die in this retirement, as he soon after did. I would endeavour by pleasant conversation to create in my children a warm and unfeigned friendship and good-will towards me, which in well-descended natures is not hard to do; for if they be furious brutes, of which this age of ours produces thousands, we are then to hate and avoid them as such.

I am angry at the custom of forbidding children

to call their father by the name of father, and to enjoin them another, as more full of respect and reverence, as if nature had not sufficiently provided for our authority. We call Almighty God Father, and disdain to have our children call us so; I have reformed this error in my family.[1] And 'tis also folly and injustice to deprive children, when grown up, of familiarity with their father, and to carry a scornful and austere countenance toward them, thinking by that to keep them in awe and obedience; for it is a very idle farce that, instead of producing the effect designed, renders fathers distasteful, and, which is worse, ridiculous to their own children. They have youth and vigour in possession, and consequently the breath and favour of the world; and therefore receive these fierce and tyrannical looks—mere scarecrows—of a man without blood, either in his heart or veins, with mockery and contempt. Though I could make myself feared, I had yet much rather make myself beloved: there are so many sorts of defects in old age, so much imbecility, and it is so liable to contempt, that the best acquisition a man can make is the kindness and affection of his own family; command and fear are no longer his weapons. Such an one I have known who, having been very imperious in his youth, when he came to be old, though he might have lived at his full ease, would ever strike, rant, swear, and curse: the most violent householder in France: fretting himself with unnecessary suspicion and vigilance. And all this rumble and clutter but to make his family cheat him the more; of his barn, his kitchen, cellar, nay, and his very purse too, others had the greatest use and share, whilst he keeps his keys in his

[1] As did Henry IV. of France; see his Life by Péréfixe.—Coste.

pocket much more carefully than his eyes. Whilst he hugs himself with the pitiful frugality of a niggard table, everything goes to rack and ruin in every corner of his house, in play, drink, all sorts of profusion, making sport in their junkets with his vain anger and fruitless parsimony. Every one is a sentinel against him, and if, by accident, any wretched fellow that serves him is of another humour, and will not join with the rest, he is presently rendered suspected to him, a bait that old age very easily bites at of itself. How often has this gentleman boasted to me in how great awe he kept his family, and how exact an obedience and reverence they paid him! How clearly he saw into his own affairs!

"Ille solus nescit omnia."[1]

I do not know any one that can muster more parts, both natural and acquired, proper to maintain dominion, than he; yet he is fallen from it like a child. For this reason it is that I have picked out him, amongst several others that I know of the same humour, for the greatest example. It were matter for a question in the schools, whether he is better thus or otherwise. In his presence, all submit to and bow to him, and give so much way to his vanity that nobody ever resists him; he has his fill of assents, of seeming fear, submission, and respect. Does he turn away a servant? he packs up his bundle, and is gone; but 'tis no further than just out of his sight: the steps of old age are so slow, the senses so troubled, that he will live and do his old office in the same house a year together without being perceived.

[1] "He alone is ignorant of all that is passing."—Terence, *Adelph.*, iv. 2, 9.

And after a fit interval of time, letters are pretended to come from a great way off, very humble, suppliant, and full of promises of amendment, by virtue of which he is again received into favour. Does Monsieur make any bargain, or prepare any despatch that does not please? 'tis suppressed, and causes afterwards forged to excuse the want of execution in the one or answer in the other. No letters being first brought to him, he never sees any but those that shall seem fit for his knowledge. If by accident they fall first into his own hand, being used to trust somebody to read them to him, he reads extempore what he thinks fit, and often makes such a one ask him pardon who abuses and rails at him in his letter. In short, he sees nothing, but by an image prepared and designed beforehand and the most satisfactory they can invent, not to rouse and awaken his ill humour and choler. I have seen, under various aspects, enough of these modes of domestic government, long-enduring, constant, to the like effect.

Women[1] are evermore addicted to cross their husbands: they lay hold with both hands on all occasions to contradict and oppose them; the first excuse serves for a plenary justification. I have seen one who robbed her husband wholesale, that, as she told her confessor, she might distribute the more liberal alms. Let who will trust to that religious dispensation. No management of affairs seems to them of sufficient dignity, if proceeding from the husband's assent; they must usurp it either by insolence or cunning, and always injuriously, or else it has not the grace and authority they desire. When, as in the case I am speaking

[1] Cotton here politely interpolates "especially the perverse and elder sorts."

of, 'tis against a poor old man and for the children, then they make use of this title to serve their passion with glory; and, as for a common service, easily cabal and combine against his government and dominion. If they be males grown up in full and flourishing health, they presently corrupt, either by force or favour, steward, receivers, and all the rout. Such as have neither wife nor son do not so easily fall into this misfortune; but withal more cruelly and unworthily. Cato the elder in his time said: So many servants, so many enemies; consider, then, whether according to the vast difference between the purity of the age he lived in and the corruption of this of ours, he does not seem to shew us that wife, son, and servant, are so many enemies to us? 'Tis well for old age that it is always accompanied by want of observation, ignorance, and a proneness to being deceived. For should we see how we are used and would not acquiesce,what would become of us? especially in such an age as this, where the very judges who are to determine our controversies are usually partisans to the young, and interested in the cause. In case the discovery of this cheating escape me, I cannot at least fail to discern that I am very fit to be cheated. And can a man ever enough exalt the value of a friend, in comparison with these civil ties? The very image of it which I see in beasts, so pure and uncorrupted, how religiously do I respect it! If others deceive me, yet do I not, at least, deceive myself in thinking I am able to defend myself from them, or in cudgelling my brains to make myself so. I protect myself from such treasons in my own bosom, not by an unquiet and tumultuous curiosity, but rather by diversion and resolution. When I hear talk of any one's

condition, I never trouble myself to think of him; I presently turn my eyes upon myself to see in what condition I am; whatever concerns another relates to me; the accident that has befallen him gives me caution, and rouses me to turn my defence that way. We every day and every hour say things of another that we might properly say of ourselves, could we but apply our observation to our own concerns, as well as extend it to others. And several authors have in this manner prejudiced their own cause by running headlong upon those they attack, and darting those shafts against their enemies, that are more properly, and with greater advantage, to be turned upon themselves.

The late Mareschal de Montluc having lost his son, who died in the island of Madeira, in truth a very worthy gentleman and of great expectation, did to me, amongst his other regrets, very much insist upon what a sorrow and heart-breaking it was that he had never made himself familiar with him; and by that humour of paternal gravity and grimace to have lost the opportunity of having an insight into and of well knowing his son, as also of letting him know the extreme affection he had for him, and the worthy opinion he had of his virtue. "That poor boy," said he, "never saw in me other than a stern and disdainful countenance, and is gone in a belief that I neither knew how to love him nor esteem him according to his desert. For whom did I reserve the discovery of that singular affection I had for him in my soul? Was it not he himself, who ought to have had all the pleasure of it, and all the obligation? I constrained and racked myself to put on and maintain this vain disguise, and have by that means deprived myself of the pleasure of his conversation, and, I doubt,

in some measure, his affection, which could not but be very cold to me, having never other from me than austerity, nor felt other than a tyrannical manner of proceeding."[1] I find this complaint to be rational and rightly apprehended: for, as I myself know by too certain experience, there is no so sweet consolation in the loss of friends as the conscience of having had no reserve or secret for them, and to have had with them a perfect and entire communication. Oh my friend,[2] am I the better for being sensible of this; or am I the worse? I am, doubtless, much the better. I am consoled and honoured, in the sorrow for his death. Is it not a pious and a pleasing office of my life to be always upon my friend's obsequies? Can there be any joy equal to this privation?

I open myself to my family, as much as I can, and very willingly let them know the state of my opinion and good will towards them, as I do to everybody else: I make haste to bring out and present myself to them; for I will not have them mistaken in me, in anything. Amongst other particular customs of our ancient Gauls, this, as Cæsar reports,[3] was one, that the sons never presented themselves before their fathers, nor durst ever appear in their company in public, till they began to bear arms; as if they would intimate by this, that it was also time for their fathers to receive them into their familiarity and acquaintance.

I have observed yet another sort of indiscretion in fathers of my time, that, not contented with having deprived their children, during their own

[1] Madame de Sévigné tells us that she never read this passage without tears in her eyes. "My God!" she exclaims, "how full is this book of good sense!"

[2] La Boetie.

[3] *De Bello Gall.*, vi. 18.

long lives, of the share they naturally ought to have had in their fortunes, they afterwards leave to their wives the same authority over their estates, and liberty to dispose of them according to their own fancy. And I have known a certain lord, one of the principal officers of the crown, who, having in reversion above fifty thousand crowns yearly revenue, died necessitous and overwhelmed with debt at above fifty years of age; his mother in her extremest decrepitude being yet in possession of all his property by the will of his father, who had, for his part, lived till near fourscore years old. This appears to me by no means reasonable. And therefore I think it of very little advantage to a man, whose affairs are well enough, to seek a wife who encumbers his estate with a very great fortune; there is no sort of foreign debt that brings more ruin to families than this: my predecessors have ever been aware of that danger and provided against it, and so have I. But those who dissuade us from rich wives, for fear they should be less tractable and kind, are out in their advice to make a man lose a real commodity for so frivolous a conjecture. It costs an unreasonable woman no more to pass over one reason than another; they cherish themselves most where they are most wrong. Injustice allures them, as the honour of their virtuous actions does the good; and the more riches they bring with them, they are so much the more good-natured, as women, who are handsome, are all the more inclined and proud to be chaste.

'Tis reasonable to leave the administration of affairs to the mothers, till the children are old enough, according to law, to manage them; but the father has brought them up very ill, if he cannot hope that, when they come to maturity,

they will have more wisdom and ability in the management of affairs than his wife, considering the ordinary weakness of the sex. It were, notwithstanding, to say the truth, more against nature to make the mothers depend upon the discretion of their children; they ought to be plentifully provided for, to maintain themselves according to their quality and age, by reason that necessity and indigence are much more unbecoming and insupportable to them than to men; the son should rather be cut short than the mother.

In general, the most judicious distribution of our goods, when we come to die, is, in my opinion, to let them be distributed according to the custom of the country; the laws have considered the matter better than we know how to do, and 'tis wiser to let them fail in their appointment, than rashly to run the hazard of miscarrying in ours. Nor are the goods properly ours, since, by civil prescription and without us, they are all destined to certain successors. And although we have some liberty beyond that, yet I think we ought not, without great and manifest cause, to take away that from one which his fortune has allotted him, and to which the public equity gives him title; and that it is against reason to abuse this liberty, in making it serve our own frivolous and private fancies. My destiny has been kind to me in not presenting me with occasions to tempt me and divert my affection from the common and legitimate institution. I see many with whom 'tis time lost to employ a long exercise of good offices: a word ill taken obliterates ten years' merit; he is happy who is in a position to oil their goodwill at this last passage. The last action carries it: not the best and most frequent offices, but the most recent and present do the work. These are people

that play with their wills as with apples or rods, to gratify or chastise every action of those who pretend to an interest in their care. 'Tis a thing of too great weight and consequence to be so tumbled and tossed and altered every moment, and wherein the wise determine once for all, having above all things regard to reason and the public observance. We lay these masculine substitutions too much to heart, proposing a ridiculous eternity to our names. We are, moreover, too superstitious in vain conjectures as to the future, that we derive from the words and actions of children. Peradventure they might have done me an injustice, in dispossessing me of my right, for having been the most dull and heavy, the most slow and unwilling at my book, not of all my brothers only, but of all the boys in the whole province: whether about learning my lesson, or about any bodily exercise. 'Tis a folly to make an election out of the ordinary course upon the credit of these divinations wherein we are so often deceived. If the ordinary rule of descent were to be violated, and the destinies corrected in the choice they have made of our heirs, one might more plausibly do it upon the account of some remarkable and enormous personal deformity, a permanent and incorrigible defect, and in the opinion of us French, who are great admirers of beauty, an important prejudice.

The pleasant dialogue betwixt Plato's legislator and his citizens will be an ornament to this place.[1] "What," said they, feeling themselves about to die, "may we not dispose of our own to whom we please? God! what cruelty that it shall not be lawful for us, according as we have been served and attended in our sickness, in our old age, in our

[1] *Laws*, lib. xi.

affairs, to give more or less to those whom we have found most diligent about us, at our own fancy and discretion!" To which the legislator answers thus: "My friends, who are now, without question, very soon to die, it is hard for you in the condition you are, either to know yourselves, or what is yours, according to the delphic inscription. I, who make the laws, am of opinion, that you neither are yourselves your own, nor is that yours of which you are possessed. Both your goods and you belong to your families, as well those past as those to come; but, further, both your family and goods much more appertain to the public. Wherefore, lest any flatterer in your old age or in your sickness, or any passion of your own, should unseasonably prevail with you to make an unjust will, I shall take care to prevent that inconvenience; but, having respect both to the universal interests of the city and that of your particular family, I shall establish laws, and make it by good reasons appear, that private convenience ought to give place to the common benefit. Go then cheerfully where human necessity calls you. It is for me, who regard no more the one thing than the other, and who, as much as in me lies, am provident of the public interest, to have a care as to what you leave behind you."

To return to my subject: it appears to me that women are very rarely born, to whom the prerogative over men, the maternal and natural excepted, is in any sort due, unless it be for the punishment of such, as in some amorous fever have voluntarily submitted themselves to them: but that in no way concerns the old ones, of whom we are now speaking. This consideration it is which has made us so willingly to enact and give force to that law, which

was never yet seen by any one,[1] by which women are excluded the succession to our crown: and there is hardly a government in the world where it is not pleaded, as it is here, by the probability of reason that authorises it, though fortune has given it more credit in some places than in others. 'Tis dangerous to leave the disposal of our succession to their judgment, according to the choice they shall make of children, which is often fantastic and unjust; for the irregular appetites and depraved tastes they have during the time of their being with child, they have at all other times in the mind. We commonly see them fond of the most weak, ricketty, and deformed children; or of those, if they have such, as are still hanging at the breast. For, not having sufficient force of reason to choose and embrace that which is most worthy, they the more willingly suffer themselves to be carried away, where the impressions of nature are most alone; like animals that know their young no longer than they give them suck. As to the rest, it is easy by experience to be discerned that this natural affection to which we give so great authority has but very weak roots. For a very little profit, we every day tear their own children out of the mothers' arms, and make them take ours in their room: we make them abandon their own to some pitiful nurse, to whom we disdain to commit ours, or to some she-goat, forbidding them, not only to give them suck, what danger soever they run thereby, but, moreover, to take any manner of care of them, that they may wholly be occupied with the care of and attendance upon ours; and we see in most of them an adulterate affection, more vehement than the natural, begotten by custom toward the foster children, and a greater solicitude

[1] The Salic law, which was an unwritten or customary one.

for the preservation of those they have taken charge of, than of their own. And that which I was saying of goats was upon this account; that it is ordinary all about where I live, to see the countrywomen, when they want milk of their own for their children, to call goats to their assistance; and I have at this hour two men-servants that never sucked women's milk more than eight days after they were born. These goats are immediately taught to come to suckle the little children, know their voices when they cry, and come running to them. If any other than this foster-child be presented to them, they refuse to let it suck; and the child in like manner will refuse to suck another goat. I saw one the other day from whom they had taken away the goat that used to nourish it, by reason the father had only borrowed it of a neighbour; the child would not touch any other they could bring, and died, doubtless of hunger.[1] Beasts as easily alter and corrupt their natural affection as we: I believe that in what Herodotus relates of a certain district of Lybia, there are many mistakes; he says that the women are there in common; but that the child, so soon as it can go, finds him out in the crowd for his father, to whom he is first led by his natural inclination.

Now, to consider this simple reason for loving our children, that we have begot them, therefore calling them our second selves, it appears, methinks, that there is another kind of production proceeding from us, that is of no less recommendation: for that which we engender by the soul, the issue of our understanding, courage, and abilities, springs from nobler parts than those of the body,

[1] Was not this an autobiographical touch? The Essayist put out his children to nurse, and so lost nearly all of them.

and that are much more our own: we are both father and mother in this generation. These cost us a great deal more and bring us more honour, if they have anything of good in them. For the value of our other children is much more theirs than ours; the share we have in them is very little; but of these, all the beauty, all the grace and value, are ours; and also they more vividly represent us than the others. Plato adds, that these are immortal children that immortalise and deify their fathers, as Lycurgus, Solon, Minos. Now, histories being full of examples of the common affection of fathers to their children, it seems not altogether improper to introduce some few of this other kind. Heliodorus, that good bishop of Trikka, rather chose to lose the dignity, profit, and devotion of so venerable a prelacy, than to lose his daughter[1]; a daughter that continues to this day very graceful and comely; but, peradventure, a little too curiously and wantonly tricked, and too amorous for an ecclesiastical and sacerdotal daughter. There was one Labienus at Rome, a man of great worth and authority, and amongst other qualities excellent in all sorts of literature, who was, as I take it, the son of that great Labienus, the chief of Cæsar's captains in the wars of Gaul; and who, afterwards, siding with Pompey the great, so valiantly maintained his cause, till he was by Cæsar defeated in Spain. This Labienus, of whom I am now speaking, had several enemies, envious of his good qualities, and, 'tis likely, the courtiers and minions of the emperors of his time who were very angry at his freedom and the paternal humour which he yet retained against tyranny, with which it is to be supposed he had tinctured his books and writings.

[1] *i.e.*, his *History of Theagines and Chariclea.*

His adversaries prosecuted several pieces he had published before the magistrates at Rome, and prevailed so far against him, as to have them condemned to the fire. It was in him that this new example of punishment was begun, which was afterwards continued against others at Rome, to punish even writing and studies with death.[1] There would not be means and matter enough of cruelty, did we not mix with them things that nature has exempted from all sense and suffering, as reputation and the products of the mind, and did we not communicate corporal punishments to the teachings and monuments of the Muses. Now, Labienus could not suffer this loss, nor survive these his so dear issue, and therefore caused himself to be conveyed and shut up alive in the monument of his ancestors, where he made shift to kill and bury himself at once. 'Tis hard to shew a more vehement paternal affection than this. Cassius Severus, a man of great eloquence and his very intimate friend, seeing his books burned, cried out that by the same sentence they should as well condemn him to the fire too, seeing that he carried in his memory all that they contained.[2] The like accident befel Cremutius Cordus, who being accused of having in his books commended Brutus and Cassius, that dirty, servile, and corrupt Senate, worthy a worse master than Tiberius, condemned his writings to the flame. He was willing to bear them company, and killed himself with fasting. The good Lucan, being condemned by that rascal Nero, at the last gasp of his life, when the greater part of his blood was already spent through the veins of his arms, which he had caused his physician to open to make

[1] Seneca, *Controv.*, lib. v.
[2] Idem, *ibid.*

him die, and when the cold had seized upon all his extremities, and began to approach his vital parts, the last thing he had in his memory was some of the verses of his *Battle of Pharsalia*, which he recited, dying with them in his mouth. What was this, but taking a tender and paternal leave of his children, in imitation of the valedictions and embraces, wherewith we part from ours, when we come to die, and an effect of that natural inclination, that suggests to our remembrance in this extremity those things which were dearest to us during the time of our life?

Can we believe that Epicurus who, as he says himself, dying of the intolerable pain of the stone, had all his consolation in the beauty of the doctrine he left behind him, could have received the same satisfaction from many children, though never so well-conditioned and brought up, had he had them, as he did from the production of so many rich writings? Or that, had it been in his choice to have left behind him a deformed and untoward child or a foolish and ridiculous book, he, or any other man of his understanding, would not rather have chosen to have run the first misfortune than the other? It had been, for example, peradventure, an impiety in St. Augustin, if, on the one hand, it had been proposed to him to bury his writings, from which religion has received so great fruit, or on the other to bury his children, had he had them, had he not rather chosen to bury his children. And I know not whether I had not much rather have begot a very beautiful one, through society with the Muses, than by lying with my wife. To this, such as it is, what I give it I give absolutely and irrevocably, as men do to their bodily children. That little I have

done for it, is no more at my own disposal; it may know many things that are gone from me, and from me hold that which I have not retained; and which, as well as a stranger, I should borrow thence, should I stand in need. If I am wiser than my book, it is richer than I. There are few men addicted to poetry, who would not be much prouder to be the father to the Æneid than to the handsomest youth of Rome; and who would not much better bear the loss of the one than of the other. For according to Aristotle,[1] the poet, of all artificers, is the fondest of his work. 'Tis hard to believe that Epaminondas, who boasted that in lieu of all posterity he left two daughters behind him that would one day do their father honour (meaning the two victories he obtained over the Lacedæmonians), would willingly have consented to exchange these for the most beautiful creatures of all Greece; or that Alexander or Cæsar ever wished to be deprived of the grandeur of their glorious exploits in war, for the convenience of children and heirs, how perfect and accomplished soever. Nay, I make a great question, whether Phidias or any other excellent sculptor would be so solicitous of the preservation and continuance of his natural children, as he would be of a rare statue, which with long labour and study he had perfected according to art. And to those furious and irregular passions that have sometimes inflamed fathers towards their own daughters, and mothers towards their own sons, the like is also found in this other sort of parentage: witness what is related of Pygmalion who, having made the statue of a woman of singular beauty, fell so passionately in love with this work of his, that

[1] Moral. Nicom., ix. 7.

the gods in favour of his passion inspired it with life :—

"Tentatum mollescit ebur, positôque rigore,
Subsidit digitis."[1]

CHAPTER IX

OF THE ARMS OF THE PARTHIANS

'Tis an ill custom and unmanly that the gentlemen of our time have got, not to put on arms but just upon the point of the most extreme necessity, and to lay them by again, so soon as ever there is any show of the danger being over; hence many disorders arise; for every one bustling and running to his arms just when he should go to charge, has his cuirass to buckle on when his companions are already put to rout. Our ancestors were wont to give their head-piece, lance and gauntlets to be carried, but never put off the other pieces so long as there was any work to be done. Our troops are now cumbered and rendered unsightly with the clutter of baggage and servants who cannot be from their masters, by reason they carry their arms. Titus Livius speaking of our nation :—

"Intolerantissima laboris corpora vix arma humeris gerebant."[2]

Many nations do yet, and did anciently, go to war without defensive arms, or with such, at least, as were of very little proof :—

"Tegmina queis capitum, raptus de subere cortex."[3]

[1] "The ivory grows soft under his touch and yields to his fingers."—Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 283.

[2] "Bodies most impatient of labour could scarce endure to wear their arms on their shoulders."—Livy, x. 28.

[3] "To whom the coverings of the heads were the bark of the cork-tree."—*Æneid*, vii. 742.

Alexander, the most adventurous captain that ever was, very seldom wore armour, and such amongst us as slight it, do not by that much harm to the main concern; for if we see some killed for want of it, there are few less whom the lumber of arms helps to destroy, either by being overburthened, crushed, and cramped with their weight, by a rude shock, or otherwise. For, in plain truth, to observe the weight and thickness of the armour we have now in use, it seems as if we only sought to defend ourselves, and are rather loaded than secured by it. We have enough to do to support its weight, being so manacled and immured, as if we were only to contend with our own arms, and as if we had not the same obligation to defend them, that they have to defend us. Tacitus [1] gives a pleasant description of the men-at-arms among our ancient Gauls, who were so armed as only to be able to stand, without power to harm or to be harmed, or to rise again if once struck down. Lucullus,[2] seeing certain soldiers of the Medes, who formed the van of Tigranes' army, heavily armed and very uneasy, as if in prisons of iron, thence conceived hopes with great ease to defeat them, and by them began his charge and victory. And now that our musketeers are in credit, I believe some invention will be found out to immure us for our safety, and to draw us to the war in castles, such as those the ancients loaded their elephants withal.

This humour is far differing from that of the younger Scipio, who sharply reprehended his soldiers for having planted caltrops under water, in a ditch by which those of the town he held besieged might sally out upon him; saying, that those who assaulted should think of attacking, and not to

[1] *Annals*, iii. 43.

[2] Plutarch, in *Vitâ*, c. 13.

fear; suspecting, with good reason, that this stop they had put to the enemies, would make themselves less vigilant upon their guard. He said also to a young man, who showed him a fine buckler he had, that he was very proud of, "It is a very fine buckler indeed, but a Roman soldier ought to repose greater confidence in his right hand than in his left."

Now 'tis nothing but the not being used to wear it that makes the weight of our armour so intolerable:—

> "L'usbergo in dosso haveano, et l'elmo in testa,
> Due di questi guerrier, de' quali io canto;
> Ne notte o di, d' appoi ch' entraro in questa
> Stanza, gl'haveano mai messi da canto;
> Che facile a portar come la vesta
> Era lor, perche in uso l'havean tanto"[1]:

the Emperor Caracalla was wont to march on foot, completely armed, at the head of his army. The Roman infantry always carried not only a morion, a sword, and a shield (for as to arms, says Cicero, they were so accustomed to have them always on, that they were no more trouble to them than their own limbs:—

> "Arma enim membra militis esse dicunt"[2])—

but, moreover, fifteen days' provision, together with a certain number of stakes, wherewith to fortify their camp, sixty pounds in weight. And Marius' soldiers, laden at the same rate, were inured to march in order of battle five leagues in five hours, and sometimes, upon any urgent occasion, six.

[1] "Two of the warriors, of whom I sing, had on their backs their cuirass and on their heads their casque, and never had night or day once laid them by, whilst here they were; those arms, by long practice, were grown as light to bear as a garment."—Ariosto, *Cant.*, xii. 30.

[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 16.

Their military discipline was much ruder than ours, and accordingly produced much greater effects. The younger Scipio, reforming his army in Spain, ordered his soldiers to eat standing, and nothing that was drest. The jeer that was given a Lacedæmonian soldier is marvellously pat to this purpose, who, in an expedition of war, was reproached for having been seen under the roof of a house: they were so inured to hardship that, let the weather be what it would, it was a shame to be seen under any other cover than the roof of heaven. We should not march our people very far at that rate.

As to what remains, Marcellinus,[1] a man bred up in the Roman wars, curiously observes the manner of the Parthians arming themselves, and the rather, for being so different from that of the Romans. "They had," says he, "armour so woven as to have all the scales fall over one another like so many little feathers; which did nothing hinder the motion of the body, and yet were of such resistance, that our darts hitting upon them, would rebound" (these were the coats of mail our forefathers were so constantly wont to use). And in another place[2]: "they had," says he, "strong and able horses, covered with thick tanned hides of leather, and were themselves armed *cap-à-pié* with great plates of iron, so artificially ordered, that in all parts of the limbs, which required bending, they lent themselves to the motion. One would have said, that they had been men of iron; having armour for the head so neatly fitted, and so naturally representing the form of a face, that they were nowhere vulnerable, save at two little round holes, that gave them a little light, corresponding with their eyes, and certain

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 7. [2] Idem, xxv. 1.

small chinks about their nostrils, through which they, with great difficulty, breathed,"

> "Flexilis inductis animatur lamina membris,
> Horribilis visu; credas simulacra moveri
> Ferrea, cognatoque viros spirare metallo.
> Par vestitus equis: ferrata fronte minantur,
> Ferratosque movent, securi vulneris, armos."[1]

'Tis a description drawing very near the fully barded equipage of a man-at-arms in France. Plutarch says,[2] that Demetrius caused two complete suits of armour to be made for himself and for Alcimus, the first warrior about him, of six score pounds weight each, whereas the ordinary suits weighed but sixty.

CHAPTER X

OF BOOKS

I MAKE no doubt but that I often happen to speak of things that are much better and more truly handled by those who are masters of the trade. You have here purely an essay of my natural parts, and not of those acquired: and whoever shall catch me tripping in ignorance, will not in any sort get the better of me; for I should be very unwilling to become responsible to another for my writings, who am not so to myself, nor satisfied with them. Whoever goes in quest of knowledge, let him fish for it where it is to be found; there is nothing I so little profess. These are fancies of my own,

[1] "Plates of steel are placed over the body so flexible that, dreadful to be seen, you would think these not living men, but moving images. The horses are similarly armed, and, secured from wounds, move their iron shoulders."—Claud, *In Ruf.*, ii. 358.

[2] *Life of Demetrius*, c. 21, where, however, the account differs.

by which I do not pretend to discover things but to lay open myself; they may, peradventure, one day be known to me, or have formerly been, according as fortune has been able to bring me in place where they have been explained; but I have utterly forgotten it; and if I am a man of some reading, I am a man of no retention; so that I can promise no certainty, more than to make known to what point the knowledge I now have has risen. Therefore, let none lay stress upon the matter I write, but upon my method in writing it. Let them observe, in what I borrow, if I have known how to choose what is proper to raise or help the invention, which is always my own. For I make others say for me, not before but after me, what, either for want of language or want of sense, I cannot myself so well express. I do not number my borrowings, I weigh them; and had I designed to raise their value by number, I had made them twice as many; they are all, or within a very few, so famed and ancient authors, that they seem, methinks, themselves sufficiently to tell who they are, without giving me the trouble. In reasons, comparisons, and arguments, if I transplant any into my own soil, and confound them amongst my own, I purposely conceal the author, to awe the temerity of those precipitate censors who fall upon all sorts of writings, particularly the late ones, of men yet living, and in the vulgar tongue which puts every one into a capacity of criticising and which seem to convict the conception and design as vulgar also. I will have them give Plutarch a fillip on my nose, and rail against Seneca when they think they rail at me. I must shelter my own weakness under these great reputations. I shall love any one that can unplume me, that is,

by clearness of understanding and judgment, and by the sole distinction of the force and beauty of the discourse. For I who, for want of memory, am at every turn at a loss to pick them out of their national livery, am yet wise enough to know, by the measure of my own abilities, that my soil is incapable of producing any of those rich flowers that I there find growing; and that all the fruits of my own growth are not worth any one of them. For this, indeed, I hold myself responsible; if I get in my own way; if there be any vanity and defect in my writings which I do not of myself perceive nor can discern, when pointed out to me by another; for many faults escape our eye, but the infirmity of judgment consists in not being able to discern them, when by another laid open to us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgment, and judgment also without them; but the confession of ignorance is one of the finest and surest testimonies of judgment that I know. I have no other officer to put my writings in rank and file, but only fortune. As things come into my head, I heap them one upon another; sometimes they advance in whole bodies, sometimes in single file. I would that every one should see my natural and ordinary pace, irregular as it is; I suffer myself to jog on at my own rate. Neither are these subjects which a man is not permitted to be ignorant in, or casually and at a venture, to discourse of. I could wish to have a more perfect knowledge of things, but I will not buy it so dear as it costs. My design is to pass over easily, and not laboriously, the remainder of my life; there is nothing that I will cudgel my brains about; no, not even knowledge, of what value soever.

I seek, in the reading of books, only to please

myself by an honest diversion; or, if I study, 'tis for no other science than what treats of the knowledge of myself, and instructs me how to die and how to live well.

"Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus."[1]

I do not bite my nails about the difficulties I meet with in my reading; after a charge or two, I give them over. Should I insist upon them, I should both lose myself and time; for I have an impatient understanding, that must be satisfied at first: what I do not discern at once, is by persistence rendered more obscure. I do nothing without gaiety; continuation and a too obstinate endeavour, darkens, stupefies, and tires my judgment. My sight is confounded and dissipated with poring; I must withdraw it, and refer my discovery to new attempts: just as, to judge rightly of the lustre of scarlet, we are taught to pass the eye lightly over it, and again to run it over at several sudden and reiterated glances. If one book do not please me, I take another; and I never meddle with any, but at such times as I am weary of doing nothing. I care not much for new ones, because the old seem fuller and stronger; neither do I converse much with Greek authors, because my judgment cannot do its work with imperfect intelligence of the material.[2]

Amongst books that are simply pleasant, of the moderns, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Rabelais,[3] and the

[1] "My horse must work according to my step."—Propertius, iv. 1, 70.

[2] Montaigne refers to his imperfect knowledge of the Greek language.

[3] From the uncritical manner in which Montaigne has placed in juxtaposition three books so disproportionate and incongruous, it is to be almost inferred that he had not attentively considered any of

Basia of Johannes Secundus (if those may be ranged under the title) are worth reading for amusement. As to the *Amadis*,[1] and such kinds of writings, they had not the credit of arresting even my childhood. And I will, moreover, say, whether boldly or rashly, that this old, heavy soul of mine is now no longer tickled with Ariosto, no, nor with the worthy Ovid; his facility and inventions, with which I was formerly so ravished, are now of no more relish, and I can hardly have the patience to read them. I speak my opinion freely of all things, even of those that, perhaps, exceed my capacity, and that I do not conceive to be, in any wise, under my jurisdiction. And, accordingly, the judgment I deliver, is to show the measure of my own sight, and not of the things I make so bold to criticise. When I find myself disgusted with Plato's *Axiochus*,[2] as with a work, with due respect to such an author be it spoken, without force, my judgment does not believe itself: it is not so arrogant as to oppose the authority of so many other famous judgments of antiquity, which it considers as its tutors and masters, and with whom it is rather content to err; in such a case, it condemns itself either to stop at the outward bark, not being able to penetrate to the heart, or to

them, and that, as to Rabelais, he merely knew him from the common report, that he was a facetious and agreeable writer. His alleged occult moral would have hardly been revealed to Montaigne, and by his obscenity the latter would not have been gravely scandalised.

[1] The judgment is correct enough, whatever fame this and other romances may have acquired. They are, as literary performances, almost uniformly extravagant, silly, and dull. If Montaigne had lived to read *Don Quixote*, he might have thought differently. But, again, *Don Quixote* was expressly written in ridicule of the school of fiction which Montaigne dismisses with contempt.

[2] The *Axiochus* is not by Plato, as Diogenes Laertius admitted. It is attributed by some to Æschines the Socratic, and by others to Xenocrates of Chalcedon.—Le Clerc.

consider it by some false light. It is content with only securing itself from trouble and disorder; as to its own weakness, it frankly acknowledges and confesses it. It thinks it gives a just interpretation to the appearances by its conceptions presented to it; but they are weak and imperfect. Most of the fables of Æsop have diverse senses and meanings, of which the mythologists chose some one that quadrates well to the fable; but, for the most part, 'tis but the first face that presents itself and is superficial only; there yet remain others more vivid, essential, and profound, into which they have not been able to penetrate; and just so 'tis with me.

But, to pursue the business of this essay, I have always thought that, in poesy, Virgil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace by many degrees excel the rest; and signally, Virgil in his *Georgics*, which I look upon as the most accomplished piece in poetry; and in comparison of which a man may easily discern that there are some places in his *Æneids*, to which the author would have given a little more of the file, had he had leisure: and the fifth book of his *Æneids* seems to me the most perfect. I also love Lucan, and willingly read him, not so much for his style, as for his own worth, and the truth and solidity of his opinions and judgments. As for good Terence, the refined elegance and grace of the Latin tongue, I find him admirable in his vivid representation of our manners and the movements of the soul; our actions throw me at every turn upon him; and I cannot read him so often that I do not still discover some new grace and beauty. Such as lived near Virgil's time complained that some should compare Lucretius to him. I am of opinion

that the comparison is, in truth, very unequal: a belief that, nevertheless, I have much ado to assure myself in, when I come upon some excellent passage in Lucretius. But if they were so angry at this comparison, what would they say to the brutish and barbarous stupidity of those who, nowadays, compare him with Ariosto? Would not Ariosto himself say?—

"O seclum insipiens et inficetum!"[1]

I think the ancients had more reason to be angry with those who compared Plautus with Terence, though much nearer the mark, than Lucretius with Virgil. It makes much for the estimation and preference of Terence, that the father of Roman eloquence has him so often, and alone of his class, in his mouth; and the opinion that the best judge of Roman poets[2] has passed upon his companion. I have often observed that those of our times, who take upon them to write comedies (in imitation of the Italians, who are happy enough in that way of writing), take three or four plots of those of Plautus or Terence to make one of their own, and crowd five or six of Boccaccio's novels into one single comedy. That which makes them so load themselves with matter is the diffidence they have of being able to support themselves with their own strength. They must find out something to lean to; and not having of their own stuff wherewith to entertain us, they bring in the story to supply the defect of language. It is quite otherwise with my author; the elegance and perfection of his way of speaking makes us lose the appetite of his plot; his refined grace and elegance of

[1] "O stupid and witless age."—Catullus, xliii. 8.
[2] Horace, *De Art. Poeticâ*, 279.

diction everywhere occupy us: he is so pleasant throughout,

"Liquidus, puroque simillimus amni,"[1]

and so possesses the soul with his graces that we forget those of his fable. This same consideration carries me further: I observe that the best of the ancient poets have avoided affectation and the hunting after, not only fantastic Spanish and Petrarchic elevations, but even the softer and more gentle touches, which are the ornament of all succeeding poesy. And yet there is no good judgment that will condemn this in the ancients, and that does not incomparably more admire the equal polish, and that perpetual sweetness and flourishing beauty of Catullus's epigrams, than all the stings with which Martial arms the tails of his. This is by the same reason that I gave before, and as Martial says of himself:—

"Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cujus locum materia successerat."[2]

The first, without being moved, or without getting angry, make themselves sufficiently felt; they have matter enough of laughter throughout, they need not tickle themselves; the others have need of foreign assistance; as they have the less wit they must have the more body; they mount on horseback, because they are not able to stand on their own legs. As in our balls, those mean fellows who teach to dance, not being able to represent the presence and dignity of our noblesse, are fain to put themselves forward with dangerous jumping, and other strange motions and tumblers'

[1] "Liquid, and likest the pure river."—Horace, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 120.

[2] "He had the less for his wit to do that the subject itself supplied what was necessary."—Martial, præf. ad lib. viii.

tricks ; and the ladies are less put to it in dances, where there are various coupees, changes, and quick motions of body, than in some other of a more sedate kind, where they are only to move a natural pace, and to represent their ordinary grace and presence. And so I have seen good drolls, when in their own everyday clothes, and with the same face they always wear, give us all the pleasure of their art, when their apprentices, not yet arrived at such a pitch of perfection, are fain to meal their faces, put themselves into ridiculous disguises, and make a hundred grotesque faces to give us whereat to laugh. This conception of mine is nowhere more demonstrable than in comparing the *Æneid* with *Orlando Furioso* ; of which we see the first, by dint of wing, flying in a brave and lofty place, and always following his point : the latter, fluttering and hopping from tale to tale, as from branch to branch, not daring to trust his wings but in very short flights, and perching at every turn, lest his breath and strength should fail :—

"Excursusque breves tentat."[1]

These, then, as to this sort of subjects, are the authors that best please me.

As to what concerns my other reading, that mixes a little more profit with the pleasure, and whence I learn how to marshal my opinions and conditions, the books that serve me to this purpose are Plutarch, since he has been translated into French, and Seneca. Both of these have this notable convenience suited to my humour, that the knowledge I there seek is discoursed in loose pieces, that do not require from me any trouble of

[1] "And he attempts short excursions."—Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 194.

reading long, of which I am incapable. Such are the minor works of the first and the epistles of the latter, which are the best and most profiting of all their writings. 'Tis no great attempt to take one of them in hand, and I give over at pleasure; for they have no sequence or dependence upon one another. These authors, for the most part, concur in useful and true opinions; and there is this parallel betwixt them, that fortune brought them into the world about the same century: they were both tutors to two Roman emperors: both sought out from foreign countries: both rich and both great men. Their instruction is the cream of philosophy, and delivered after a plain and pertinent manner. Plutarch is more uniform and constant; Seneca more various and waving: the last toiled and bent his whole strength to fortify virtue against weakness, fear, and vicious appetites; the other seems more to slight their power, and to disdain to alter his pace and to stand upon his guard. Plutarch's opinions are Platonic, gentle, and accommodated to civil society; those of the other are Stoical and Epicurean, more remote from the common use, but, in my opinion, more individually commodious and more firm. Seneca seems to lean a little to the tyranny of the emperors of his time, and only seems; for I take it for certain that he speaks against his judgment when he condemns the action of the generous murderers of Cæsar. Plutarch is frank throughout: Seneca abounds with brisk touches and sallies; Plutarch with things that warm and move you more; this contents and pays you better: he guides us, the other pushes us on.

As to Cicero, his works that are most useful to my design are they that treat of manners and rules

of our life. But boldly to confess the truth (for since one has passed the barriers of impudence, there is no bridle), his way of writing appears to me negligent and uninviting: for his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies take up the greatest part of his work: whatever there is of life and marrow is smothered and lost in the long preparation. When I have spent an hour in reading him, which is a great deal for me, and try to recollect what I have thence extracted of juice and substance, for the most part I find nothing but wind; for he is not yet come to the arguments that serve to his purpose, and to the reasons that properly help to form the knot I seek. For me, who only desire to become more wise, not more learned or eloquent, these logical and Aristotelian dispositions of parts are of no use. I would have a man begin with the main proposition. I know well enough what death and pleasure are; let no man give himself the trouble to anatomise them to me. I look for good and solid reasons, at the first dash, to instruct me how to stand their shock, for which purpose neither grammatical subtleties nor the quaint contexture of words and argumentations are of any use at all. I am for discourses that give the first charge into the heart of the redoubt; his languish about the subject; they are proper for the schools, for the bar, and for the pulpit, where we have leisure to nod, and may awake, a quarter of an hour after, time enough to find again the thread of the discourse. It is necessary to speak after this manner to judges, whom a man has a design to gain over, right or wrong, to children and common people, to whom a man must say all, and see what will come of it. I would not have an author make it his business

to render me attentive: or that he should cry out fifty times *Oyez!* as the heralds do. The Romans, in their religious exercises, began with *Hoc age*: as we in ours do with *Sursum corda*; these are so many words lost to me: I come already fully prepared from my chamber. I need no allurement, no invitation, no sauce; I eat the meat raw, so that, instead of whetting my appetite by these preparatives, they tire and pall it. Will the licence of the time excuse my sacrilegious boldness if I censure the dialogism of Plato himself as also dull and heavy, too much stifling the matter, and lament so much time lost by a man, who had so many better things to say, in so many long and needless preliminary interlocutions? My ignorance will better excuse me in that I understand not Greek so well as to discern the beauty of his language. I generally choose books that use sciences, not such as only lead to them. The two first, and Pliny, and their like, have nothing of this *Hoc age*; they will have to do with men already instructed; or if they have, 'tis a substantial *Hoc age*; and that has a body by itself. I also delight in reading the Epistles to Atticus, not only because they contain a great deal of the history and affairs of his time, but much more because I therein discover much of his own private humours; for I have a singular curiosity, as I have said elsewhere, to pry into the souls and the natural and true opinions of the authors, with whom I converse. A man may indeed judge of their parts, but not of their manners nor of themselves, by the writings they exhibit upon the theatre of the world. I have a thousand times lamented the loss of the treatise Brutus wrote upon Virtue, for it is well to learn the theory from those who best know the practice.

But seeing the matter preached and the preacher are different things, I would as willingly see Brutus in Plutarch, as in a book of his own. I would rather choose to be certainly informed of the conference he had in his tent with some particular friends of his the night before a battle, than of the harangue he made the next day to his army; and of what he did in his closet and his chamber, than what he did in the public square and in the senate. As to Cicero, I am of the common opinion that, learning excepted, he had no great natural excellence. He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat, heavy men, such as he was, usually are; but given to ease, and had, in truth, a mighty share of vanity and ambition. Neither do I know how to excuse him for thinking his poetry fit to be published; 'tis no great imperfection to make ill verses, but it is an imperfection not to be able to judge how unworthy his verses were of the glory of his name. For what concerns his eloquence, that is totally out of all comparison, and I believe it will never be equalled. The younger Cicero, who resembled his father in nothing but in name, whilst commanding in Asia, had several strangers one day at his table, and, amongst the rest, Cestius seated at the lower end, as men often intrude to the open tables of the great. Cicero asked one of his people who that man was, who presently told him his name; but he, as one who had his thoughts taken up with something else, and who had forgotten the answer made him, asking three or four times, over and over again, the same question, the fellow, to deliver himself from so many answers and to make him know him by some particular circumstance; "'tis that Cestius," said he, "of whom it was told you, that he makes no great

account of your father's eloquence in comparison of his own." At which Cicero, being suddenly nettled, commanded poor Cestius presently to be seized, and caused him to be very well whipped in his own presence[1]; a very discourteous entertainer! Yet even amongst those, who, all things considered, have reputed his eloquence incomparable, there have been some, who have not stuck to observe some faults in it: as that great Brutus his friend, for example, who said 'twas a broken and feeble eloquence, *fractam et elumbem*.[2] The orators also, nearest to the age wherein he lived, reprehended in him the care he had of a certain long cadence in his periods, and particularly took notice of these words, *esse videatur*, which he there so often makes use of.[3] For my part, I more approve of a shorter style, and that comes more roundly off. He does, though, sometimes shuffle his parts more briskly together, but 'tis very seldom. I have myself taken notice of this one passage:—

"Ego vero me minus diu senem mallem, quam esse senem, antequam essem."[4]

The historians are my right ball, for they are pleasant and easy, and where man in general, the knowledge of whom I hunt after, appears more vividly and entire than anywhere else[5]: the variety and truth of his internal qualities, in gross and piecemeal, the diversity of means by which he is united and knit, and the accidents that threaten

[1] Seneca, *Suasor*, 8.
[2] Tacitus, *De Oratoribus*, c. 18.
[3] Idem, *ibid.*, c. 23.
[4] "I had rather be old a brief time, than be old before old age."—Cicero, *De Senect.*, c. 10.
[5] *i.e.*, The easiest of my amusements, the right ball at tennis being that which coming to the player from the right hand, is much easier played with.—Coste.

him. Now those that write lives, by reason they insist more upon counsels than events, more upon what sallies from within, than upon what happens without, are the most proper for my reading; and, therefore, above all others, Plutarch is the man for me. I am very sorry we have not a dozen Laertii,[1] or that he was not further extended; for I am equally curious to know the lives and fortunes of these great instructors of the world, as to know the diversities of their doctrines and opinions. In this kind of study of histories, a man must tumble over, without distinction, all sorts of authors, old and new, French or foreign, there to know the things of which they variously treat. But Cæsar, in my opinion, particularly deserves to be studied, not for the knowledge of the history only, but for himself, so great an excellence and perfection he has above all the rest, though Sallust be one of the number. In earnest, I read this author with more reverence and respect than is usually allowed to human writings; one while considering him in his person, by his actions and miraculous greatness, and another in the purity and inimitable polish of his language, wherein he not only excels all other historians, as Cicero confesses,[2] but, peradventure, even Cicero himself; speaking of his enemies with so much sincerity in his judgment, that, the false colours with which he strives to palliate his evil cause, and the ordure of his pestilent ambition excepted, I think there is no fault to be objected against him, saving this, that he speaks too sparingly of himself, seeing so many great things could not have been performed under his conduct, but that his own personal acts must necessarily

[1] Diogenes Laertius, who wrote the Lives of the Philosophers.
[2] Cicero, *Brutus*, c. 75.

have had a greater share in them than he attributes to them.

I love historians, whether of the simple sort, or of the higher order. The simple, who have nothing of their own to mix with it, and who only make it their business to collect all that comes to their knowledge, and faithfully to record all things, without choice or discrimination, leave to us the entire judgment of discerning the truth. Such, for example, amongst others, is honest Froissart, who has proceeded in his undertaking with so frank a plainness that, having committed an error, he is not ashamed to confess and correct it in the place where the finger has been laid, and who represents to us even the variety of rumours that were then spread abroad, and the different reports that were made to him; 'tis the naked and inform matter of history, and of which every one may make his profit, according to his understanding. The more excellent sort of historians have judgment to pick out what is most worthy to be known; and, of two reports, to examine which is the most likely to be true: from the condition of princes and their humours, they conclude their counsels, and attribute to them words proper for the occasion; such have title to assume the authority of regulating our belief to what they themselves believe; but certainly, this privilege belongs to very few. For the middle sort of historians, of which the most part are, they spoil all; they will chew our meat for us; they take upon them to judge of, and consequently, to incline the history to their own fancy; for if the judgment lean to one side, a man cannot avoid wresting and writhing his narrative to that bias; they undertake to select things worthy to be known, and yet often conceal from us

such a word, such a private action, as would much better instruct us; omit, as incredible, such things as they do not understand, and peradventure some, because they cannot express them well in good French or Latin. Let them display their eloquence and intelligence, and judge according to their own fancy: but let them, withal, leave us something to judge of after them, and neither alter nor disguise, by their abridgments and at their own choice, anything of the substance of the matter, but deliver it to us pure and entire in all its dimensions.

For the most part, and especially in these latter ages, persons are culled out for this work from amongst the common people, upon the sole consideration of well-speaking, as if we were to learn grammar from them; and the men so chosen have fair reason, being hired for no other end and pretending to nothing but babble, not to be very solicitous of any part but that, and so, with a fine jingle of words, prepare us a pretty contexture of reports they pick up in the streets. The only good histories are those that have been written by the persons themselves who held command in the affairs whereof they write, or who participated in the conduct of them, or, at least, who have had the conduct of others of the same nature. Such are almost all the Greek and Roman histories: for, several eye-witnesses having written of the same subject, in the time when grandeur and learning commonly met in the same person, if there happen to be an error, it must of necessity be a very slight one, and upon a very doubtful incident. What can a man expect from a physician who writes of war, or from a mere scholar, treating of the designs of princes? If we could take notice

how scrupulous the Romans were in this, there would need but this example: Asinius Pollio found in the histories of Cæsar himself something misreported, a mistake occasioned, either by reason he could not have his eye in all parts of his army at once and had given credit to some individual persons who had not delivered him a very true account; or else, for not having had too perfect notice given him by his lieutenants of what they had done in his absence.[1] By which we may see, whether the inquisition after truth be not very delicate, when a man cannot believe the report of a battle from the knowledge of him who there commanded, nor from the soldiers who were engaged in it, unless, after the method of a judicial inquiry, the witnesses be confronted and objections considered upon the proof of the least detail of every incident. In good earnest the knowledge we have of our own affairs, is much more obscure: but that has been sufficiently handled by Bodin, and according to my own sentiment.[2] A little to aid the weakness of my memory (so extreme that it has happened to me more than once, to take books again into my hand as new and unseen, that I had carefully read over a few years before, and scribbled with my notes) I have adopted a custom of late, to note at the end of every book (that is, of those I never intend to read again) the time when I made an end on't, and the judgment I had made of it, to the end that this might, at least, represent to me the character and general idea I had conceived of the author in reading it; and I will here transcribe some of those annotations.

[1] Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 56.

[2] In the work by Jean Bodin, entitled "Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem." 1566.

I wrote this, some ten years ago, in my Guicciardini[1] (of what language soever my books speak to me in, I always speak to them in my own): "He is a diligent historiographer, from whom, in my opinion, a man may learn the truth of the affairs of his time, as exactly as from any other; in the most of which he was himself also a personal actor, and in honourable command. There is no appearance that he disguised anything, either upon the account of hatred, favour, or vanity; of which the free censures he passes upon the great ones, and particularly those by whom he was advanced and employed in commands of great trust and honour, as Pope Clement VII., give ample testimony. As to that part which he thinks himself the best at, namely, his digressions and discourses, he has indeed some very good, and enriched with fine features; but he is too fond of them: for, to leave nothing unsaid, having a subject so full, ample, almost infinite, he degenerates into pedantry and smacks a little of scholastic prattle. I have also observed this in him, that of so many souls and so many effects, so many motives and so many counsels as he judges, he never attributes any one to virtue, religion, or conscience, as if all these were utterly extinct in the world: and of all the actions, how brave soever in outward show they appear in themselves, he always refers the cause and motive to some vicious occasion or some prospect of profit. It is impossible to imagine but that, amongst such an infinite number of actions as he makes mention of, there must be some one produced by the way of honest reason.

[1] These are very interesting and precious memoranda, since the destination of the copies, and even their survival, is uncertain. Comp. i. xl.

No corruption could so universally have infected men that some one would not escape the contagion: which makes me suspect that his own taste was vicious, whence it might happen that he judged other men by himself."

In my Philip de Commines there is this written: "You will here find the language sweet and delightful, of a natural simplicity, the narration pure, with the good faith of the author conspicuous therein; free from vanity, when speaking of himself, and from affection or envy, when speaking of others: his discourses and exhortations rather accompanied with zeal and truth, than with any exquisite sufficiency; and, throughout, authority and gravity, which bespeak him a man of good extraction, and brought up in great affairs."

Upon the Memoirs of Monsieur du Bellay I find this: "'Tis always pleasant to read things written by those that have experienced how they ought to be carried on; but withal, it cannot be denied but there is a manifest decadence in these two lords[1] from the freedom and liberty of writing that shine in the elder historians, such as the Sire de Joinville, the familiar companion of St. Louis; Eginhard, chancellor to Charlemagne; and of later date, Philip de Commines. What we have here is rather an apology for King Francis, against the Emperor Charles V., than history. I will not believe that they have falsified anything, as to matter of fact; but they make a common practice of twisting the judgment of events, very often contrary to reason, to our advantage, and of omitting whatsoever is ticklish to be handled in the life of their master; witness the proceedings

[1] Martin du Bellay and Guillaume de Langey, brothers, who jointly wrote the Memoirs.

of Messieurs de Montmorency and de Biron, which are here omitted: nay, so much as the very name of Madame d'Estampes is not here to be found. Secret actions an historian may conceal; but to pass over in silence what all the world knows and things that have drawn after them public and such high consequences, is an inexcusable defect. In fine, whoever has a mind to have a perfect knowledge of King Francis and the events of his reign, let him seek it elsewhere, if my advice may prevail. The only profit a man can reap from these Memoirs is in the special narrative of battles and other exploits of war wherein these gentlemen were personally engaged; in some words and private actions of the princes of their time, and in the treaties and negotiations carried on by the Seigneur de Langey, where there are everywhere things worthy to be known, and discourses above the vulgar strain."

END OF VOLUME THE SECOND